

*INTRODUCING MEN  
TO CHRIST*

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WEATHERFORD

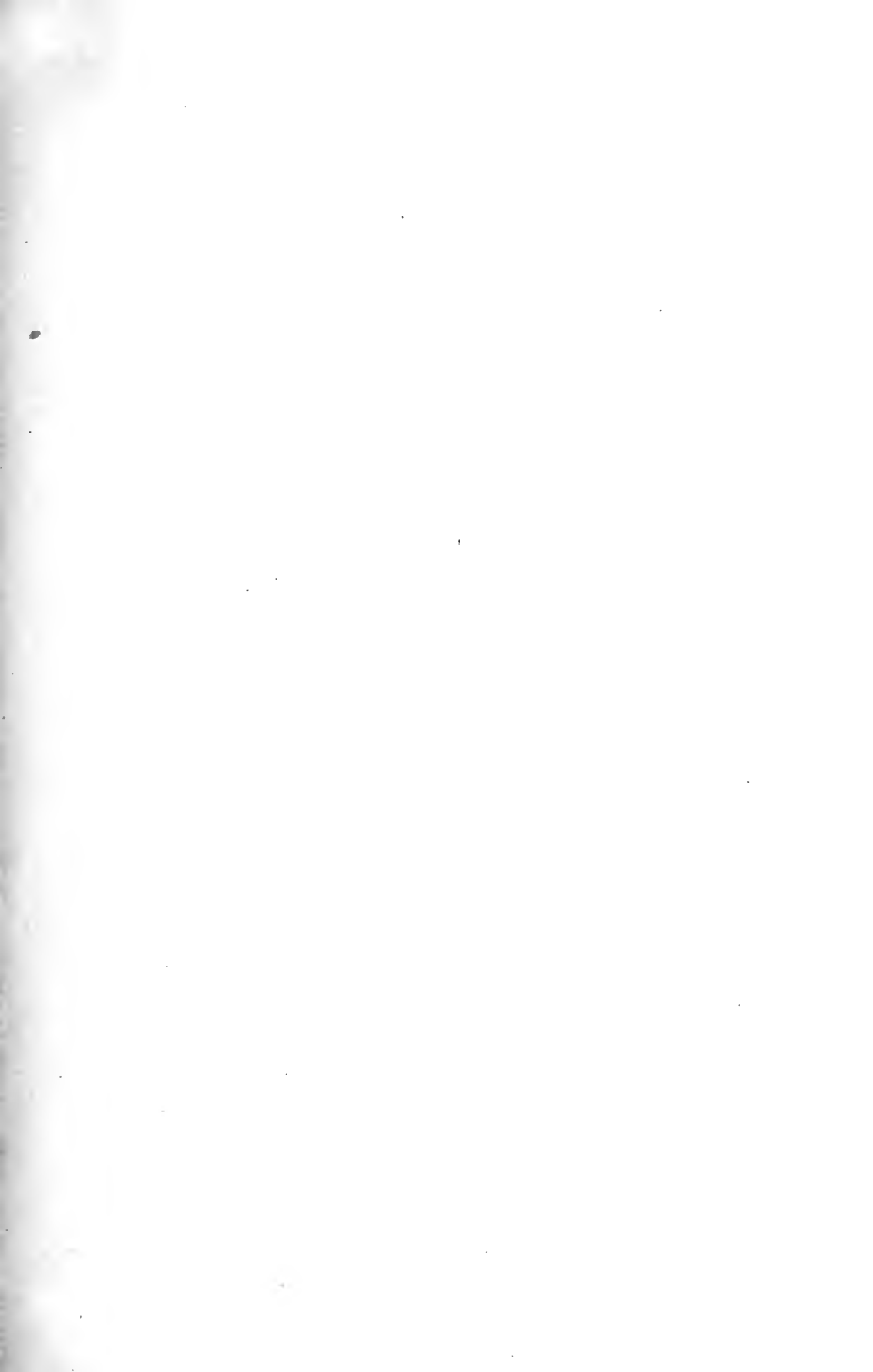


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# INTRODUCING MEN TO CHRIST

## BOOKS BY W. D. WEATHERFORD

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"Fundamental Religious Principles in  
Browning's Poetry." \$1.00.

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"Negro Life in the South." 75 cents.

Y. M. C. A. PRESS, New York.

# INTRODUCING MEN TO CHRIST

## FUNDAMENTAL STUDIES

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BY

W. D. WEATHERFORD, Ph.D.

*Author of "Fundamental Religious Principles in Browning's Poetry"  
and "Negro Life in the South"*

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NASHVILLE, TENN.; DALLAS, TEX.  
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**Dedicated to those Epworth Leaguers who, true to their name,  
are sharing their religious experience with  
their daily associates.**



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## INTRODUCTION.

THERE is a very great need to-day that men shall be brought to feel that religion is not a thing apart, that it is knit up with the ordinary processes of our lives. We need to see that being religious is not having some vague, mystical experience, but living a life of real friendship. Perhaps as never before men are coming to realize that Christian life is not abnormal, but the most completely normal. In this life we use the same powers of personality which we use in our ordinary friendships, the sole difference being that in this God friendship we are associated with a perfect and full personality; while in all other friendships we are associated with incomplete and partial persons like ourselves. This makes a difference in the intensity and meaning of our friendship, but no difference as to kind.

Further, there is a need to quiet the minds of some who seem to think psychology is putting God out of the workings of the human soul. A few year ago, when evolution was in the enthusiastic flush of a new discovery, many of its advocates and still more of the Christian people thought it was destined to explain away God's working in the universe of physical nature. But we have long since ceased to feel that evolution is opposed to religion. It claims to be only a theory of the method of creation; and if it can and does reveal to us the method by which God works, we may well rejoice in this new light, which is essentially religious.

Psychology is just now beginning to make a serious study of the phenomena of religious experience; and as we come to understand the psychic changes which go on at conversion, some seem to fear that God's relation to the inner experiences of man will be explained away. On the contrary, I am convinced that we shall soon come to see that psychology is simply showing us the manner in which God

moves upon a human spirit, even as science helped us to see how he moved in the realm of the physical. We therefore have nothing to fear ultimately from a careful study of the psychic laws of religious experience. Only there is need to help men see this, lest on the one hand some may repudiate psychology, and on the other some may repudiate religion.

In the third place, there is need that men shall recognize that there are fundamental laws for spreading the Gospel. One of these fundamental laws is testimony. The Church and religious workers have far too long neglected this form of Christian activity.

There needs to be a group of men and women in every community who have gotten clear conceptions of what it is to be a Christian, how this fact relates itself to other life, upon what facts Christian experience is based, and whether or not the whole matter is reasonable and normal. Such persons by personal dealings with others may lead the strongest and best of their communities into fellowship with Christ.

This little volume being purely practical in purpose, can in only a very brief and inadequate way set forth some of these fundamental truths, in the hope that some who are in doubt may be strengthened; that some who have not before done so may find expression for their religious experiences; and that all who thus see more clearly the meaning of their experience may through personal testimony lead others into fellowship with Christ.

My ten years of travel and work with college men have led me to the deliberate conclusion that the most real facts of to-day are the awful ravages of sin, and the consequent need of men, the uncertainty on the part of many as to how men can get freedom from sin, and the absolute truth of the fact, which any one may verify, that Christ can save and make free.

I wish to acknowledge my obligations to Mr. A. J. Elliott and Mr. Ray H. Legate for many helpful suggestions, and



to Mr. W. H. Morgan for his services in correction of the manuscript. I ought also to acknowledge my deep indebtedness to the Bible study courses of Dr. Edward I. Bosworth for much of the inspiration of this book.

If this little volume leads even a few<sup>1</sup> to accept the Christ friendship as a life program; if it enlightens and strengthens the faith of some; if it encourages even a small number to begin reporting their religious experiences to others, thus leading them into the Christian life; above all, if it helps only a few to see how truly normal, how simple, how beautiful, and how wonderfully impelling is this friendship of the Christ, I shall be deeply grateful to those who called it forth.

NASHVILLE, TENN., December 31, 1910.



STUDY I.

ENTRANCE INTO CHRISTIAN LIFE.

## STUDY I. ENTRANCE INTO CHRISTIAN LIFE.

"And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." (John xvii. 3.)

"Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." (John v. 39, 40.)

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## PART I. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

PERHAPS the greatest religious need of our time is that we shall get away from the false conceptions of what it means to be a Christian. Not a few people still hold to the idea that believing certain things makes one a follower of Christ. Every one must recognize that one's belief vitally affects one's life, hence no one can afford to be careless about what he believes; but no amount of intellectual assent to truths of whatever order will make one a Christian. The Pharisees believed that a careful reading and memorizing of Scripture, a punctilious keeping of the law, a slavish following of the traditions would bring eternal life. Christ bluntly sets aside any such hope.

Others think that being a Christian means the experiencing of ecstatic feelings of joy and peace. No one can doubt that religious life brings both peace and joy, and at times these feelings burst forth into ecstasy; but the waiting for such a feeling to come has kept many a person from entering the realm of the Christian life. In all of Christ's teachings he does not prescribe any certain type of feelings the experiencing of which shall be the condition of becoming a disciple of his.

A third class of people hold that Christian experience is simply a high type of moral life. Matthew Arnold's defini-

tion of religion as "morality touched with emotion" has found many sympathizers. Christian experience cannot be divorced from moral life, but it is deeper than simple morality. Indeed, it is the mainspring of our truest and surest morality.

What, then, is it to be a Christian? Christ put it tersely when he said it was to know God and his messenger Jesus Christ. To be a Christian is to be a friend of God as he is revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. One must not stop with the searching of the Scripture, but through it must pass on to a knowledge and fellowship with Christ. One must expect to have such feelings and only such as one would have in the presence of a great and true friend. And in view of this fellowship with Christ, one must act as is becoming in the presence of this perfect Friend. For such a morality the Christ friendship furnishes the power.

Does the precept run "Believe in good,  
In justice, truth, now understood  
For the first time?"—or, "Believe in me,  
Who lived and died, yet essentially  
Am Lord of life?" Whoever can take  
The same to his heart and for mere love's sake  
Conceive of the love—that man obtains  
A new truth; no conviction gains  
Of an old one only, made intense  
By a fresh appeal to his faded sense.

—*Browning's "Christian Eve."*

## STUDY I. ENTRANCE INTO CHRISTIAN LIFE.

"Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isa. lv. 6, 7.)

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 8, 9.)

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## PART 2. STEPS IN ENTERING THIS FRIENDSHIP.

*(a) Forgiveness.*

IF, as our first study set forth, to be a Christian means to be on terms of friendship with the God whom Christ came to make known, then the foremost question for every man is, how he may enter this friendship. What are the conditions of coming into friendly relations with this Father God?

The first condition of any true friendship is that all barriers separating the two persons shall be removed. Let us suppose that you and I are so related to each other that a friendship is not only desirable but possible. Let us suppose that I get sick and you visit me, or that I am in need and you help me, or that I am lonely and you comfort me. Let us suppose that when the crisis is past I show no appreciation of your kindness; that I pass it by and never indicate the least gratitude. Or let us suppose (a perfectly possible thing) that I am not only silent about your kindness, but I deliberately go out and defame your name. In either case there is a barrier raised between you and me. Until that barrier of misunderstanding is removed, there can be no friendship.

If you are a true soul you will still continue to love me,

but you cannot approve my actions. How can I get back into your approving friendship? There is just one way. When I come to realize that I have done you a wrong, that I have been unfair, I will, like a man, come back to you and ask your forgiveness. If you are genuine, and if you know or have reason to believe that I am in earnest, I will get forgiveness—that is, the barrier will be removed and a real friendship will be possible.

Our Christlike God has done everything possible to give us larger life. He has given us Christian homes, Christian Churches, Christian schools—above all, he has given us Jesus Christ; and yet many of us have been absolutely indifferent, or perhaps we have committed overt acts of sin. In either case we have greatly grieved the heart of our Father God. He loves us, but he cannot approve of our life. How can we get back into his approving love? By coming to him in simple, manly fashion, and asking him to forgive us our indifference and sin. All true men and women will ask forgiveness when they know they have wronged a friend. Will we be fair-minded enough to do the same with God?

Can it be true, the grace he is declaring?

O let us trust him, for his words are fair!

Man, what is this, and why art thou despairing?

God shall forgive thee all but thy despair.

—Myers's "*St. Paul*."

## STUDY I. ENTRANCE INTO CHRISTIAN LIFE.

"Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God." (Mic. vi. 6-8.)

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## PART 3. STEPS IN ENTERING THIS FRIENDSHIP

(Continued).

(b) *Repentance.*

PERHAPS some student is still unsatisfied about the condition of asking this forgiveness. He is looking for some upheaval of the emotions to warn him that he must ask for forgiveness. We have so long been schooled in the thought of emotionalism that we fear to trust our good judgment and the dictates of our conscience telling us that we are wrong and that we ought to get right. If we have sinned, it is the God in us (we call it conscience) that tells us so; and if we know that we ought to get right, it is our God-given judgment that seeks to direct. We can trust these, regardless of what our feelings are or are not.

I spoke once at the University of Tennessee on the social meaning of a man's sin. W—, the captain of the football team and the President of the Young Men's Christian Association, told me next day that after the address one of his team-mates had come into his room and, with tears in his eyes and signs of deep emotion, had told W— he had been unfair toward him; that he had tried to defeat him for the cap-



taincy, etc., and wanted to ask his forgiveness. This man was affected with a deep emotion; but another man with a different temperament might have committed the same sin, asked the same forgiveness with equal sincerity and genuineness, but with less or almost no emotion.

The final test is not how we feel but what we think of our wrong, and what we will do about it. The recognition that we are wrong, the deliberate turning away from the wrong because our hearts despise it, and the determination to do right—that is the real condition of receiving God's forgiveness. It is technically called repentance.

Well, let me sin, but not with my consenting;

Well, let me die, but willing to be whole;

Never, O, Christ—so stay me from relenting,

There shall be truce betwixt my flesh and soul.

—Myers's "*St. Paul*."

## STUDY I. ENTRANCE INTO CHRISTIAN LIFE.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." (Isa. xxvi. 3.)

"And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. . . . And when Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. (Matt. viii. 8, 10.)

"Jesus said therefore unto the twelve, Would ye also go away? Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." (John vi. 67-69.)

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## PART 4. STEPS IN ENTERING THIS FRIENDSHIP

(Continued).

(c) *Faith.*

IF two people wish to be friends, they must freely and fully yield themselves to each other. Trust is the foundation stone of friendship. Two people cannot be friends who constantly suspect each other. Just as rapidly as their knowledge of each other justifies, they must increasingly trust each the other. A college president has said that the man who goes through college and in his four years has not found one person into the deep of whose soul he can look and say, "O soul, I am thine," and hear the answer back, "Yea, soul, and I am thine," has missed the purpose of his college career. That finest intercourse of soul with soul which kindles character is based on trust, confidence, faith.

God has endeavored through all the ages so to reveal himself to us that we will trust him. The beauty and strength of character revealed in Jesus Christ must of necessity draw out from every attentive soul a growing trust.

Faith, then, is the deliberate trust in and the active surrender of one's self to a person whose character is such as to command the soul. It is by the kindling power of this trustful relationship that a man grows into likeness with the character in whom he puts his trust. To be a Christian one must increasingly surrender himself to the Father God as he has revealed himself in Jesus Christ.

*Personal Thought:* Have you ever found yourself wondering whether Christian life robs you of the larger things? Can God be trusted to deal fairly with us? If so, does it help our friendship with him to doubt him continually?

## STUDY I. ENTRANCE INTO CHRISTIAN LIFE.

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.)

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him. . . . Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John xiv. 21, 23.)

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## PART 5. STEPS IN ENTERING THIS FRIENDSHIP

(Continued).

(d) *Association.*

FRIENDSHIP is a communion of two souls, based on a harmony in the fundamental ideals of life. Without this harmony of ideals there can be no real friendship. If you are honest and I am a thief, we cannot be real friends. There is no harmony of ideals.

How, then, can you and I grow into a friendship if our ideals are different? We will drop in to see each other day by day. In an open-minded, kindly spirit we will talk over—sometimes casually, sometimes more seriously—the things in which we are interested. We will talk about football, fraternities, social life, culture, religion. Little by little I come to see what your attitude toward these things is, and you come to see mine. With both of us in a kindly and fair-minded attitude, the better things of your life will appeal to me and the better things of my life will appeal to you. Little by little the meaner things in each life will drop away, and we will come together into a real harmony of fundamental ideals. This is the inevitable result of a kindly and open-

mind association. It cannot possibly be otherwise. To put one's self into the presence of another does not necessarily mean physical proximity. One may put himself into the presence of another through letters, through the study of his writings, or through the reports of experience which others have had with this person.

If we want to be friends of Jesus Christ, we will go to him day by day in the kindly and open-minded spirit. We will sit down in his presence and find what he thinks of men, what he thinks of God, of sin, of joy, of sorrow. Happily we can find what Christ's attitude is toward these fundamental facts of life by reading his words in the Bible. This is what gives such tremendous importance to daily Bible study. It is our best way of keeping ourselves continually in the presence of Christ's attitude toward life.

Now, if we are open-minded as we put ourselves in the presence of these fundamental ideals of Christ's life, we will little by little be drawn up into these same ideals. "And I, if I be lifted up, . . . will draw all men unto me." This is the natural and inevitable process. We do not do it; it does itself.

I cannot grow in your friendship if I go off to China, never write to you, never hear from you, never think of you. The law of a growing friendship is association; not physical proximity, but living in the presence of the spirit of your life, the interchange of thought and ideals. If I am to grow in the friendship of God and Christ, it will be necessary for me to put myself constantly into their presence, and day by day I will be transformed into the same image.

"Speak to him thou, for he hears, and spirit with spirit can meet—  
Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

## STUDY I. ENTRANCE INTO CHRISTIAN LIFE.

"But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach: because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. x. 8-10.)

"And I say unto you, Every one who shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me in the presence of men shall be denied in the presence of the angels of God." (Luke xii. 8, 9.)

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## PART 6. STEPS IN ENTERING THIS FRIENDSHIP

(Continued).

(e) *Confession.*

ONE of the laws of growth in friendship is expression. "That which is covered and unexpressed must die" is not only the dictum of psychology but also of every man's practical experience. If I wish to get free from a temptation I do not continue to say to it, "I will forget you," for each time I say that the very expression makes the temptation clearer and more definite in my mind. The psychological way of fighting a temptation is to transfer our thought to some other subject which is powerful enough to absorb us, thus helping us to forget the evil, to cover it up and let it die.

Herein lies one of the supreme values of Christianity: it gives us the supreme object of the world on which we can center our thought—even Jesus Christ. The best way of fighting temptation is to center our thought on the matchless personality of Christ.

The feeling of friendship which does not find expression will die. If you and I are friends and yet I am unwilling to

give expression to that friendship, it will atrophy. If I slip out of the room quietly when some one else enters, just to keep from being seen in your presence, my friendship will soon perish. A friendship which is not deep enough to be worth acknowledgment is a worthless matter.

A great many people are trying to live the silent Christian life. Like Nicodemus, they come to Jesus by night. Like him, they say that it is better to live than openly to profess; but alas! like him also, when the testing time comes their silent, unexpressed friendship has not that robustness and strength which enables them to stand boldly for Christ. Many seem to think that Christ's demand for open confession is a purely arbitrary demand. Not so; it is founded on the very nature of our being. Christ does not arbitrarily stand at the door of the kingdom and refuse us entrance unless we will confess him. He never does things arbitrarily. But Christ does stand at the door and say that you cannot grow in fellowship with him unless you are willing to be open and above board in your friendship; and he says this because that is the very nature of our being.

One of the serious dangers of our time is that we shall so far recoil from false expression, hypocrisy, and over-profession that we shall be unwilling to give expression to the real convictions of our lives, and hence fail to fulfill a law of our being without which no friendship can grow. One of the most important forms of confession is publicly joining the Church; for to become a Church member does not essentially mean the subscribing to creeds and dogmas, but the affiliation of our lives with the body of men and women who are trying to make Christ known.

*Personal Thought:* Have we ever thought it just a little unmanly to stand openly for Jesus Christ? Is this because we are ashamed of the manhood of Christ, or because we are ashamed of our own manhood? If it is the latter, will the refusal to avow our desire to be Christ's friend help us to grow into such a character that we need not be ashamed?

## STUDY I. ENTRANCE INTO CHRISTIAN LIFE.

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. xii. 21.)

"I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the needy: and the cause of him that I knew not I searched out." (Job xxix. 15, 16.)

"And he answered and said unto them, Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them." (Luke vii. 22.)

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## PART 7. STEPS IN ENTERING THIS FRIENDSHIP

(Concluded).

*(f) Service.*

ANOTHER fundamental law of life is service. That which does not serve must die. If I tie my hand down to my side and let it remain there for a year, when I remove the bandage the arm will hang lifeless and dead. It has atrophied because it has not served. If you and I are friends living in the same house, and you are launching a great altruistic scheme, the impulse of friendship will be to serve you. But suppose I say I am too busy; suppose I say there is no money in that for me; suppose I refuse to give you counsel or encouragement; what will happen to my friendship? It will die, of course. It costs something to be a friend to a man, and one cannot pay the price in cheap coin. The only coin that will circulate here is time, thoughtfulness, love, life. One reason why so many of us have few friends is that we are not willing to pay the price. We would pay money—anything—except that final and supreme thing which it takes to have friendship—the giving of life in loving service. Perhaps this is why so many men and women cannot or do not find happiness in the home life. It costs life to be the kind of man or woman that will make the right conditions for a friendship as husband or as wife. Not infrequently one of the parties is unwilling to pay the price, and no real friendship can live.



To be a friend of Jesus Christ means service. The very essence of Christianity is that we shall share with our brother that which we have. No man can be a Christian who will not serve in Christ's kingdom; and our field of service is among men who are Christ's brothers and God's children. "For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat. . . . Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." (Matt. xxv. 35, 40.)

Now this is not simply a dictum of religion; it is a fundamental law of our being. That which does not serve dies. It is because so many have neglected to heed this law that they have found themselves without any abiding consciousness of a friendly relationship with Christ. In personal conference with hundreds of college men to whom religion has come to have no meaning, I have almost always discovered the fact that such men had not been workers. They had not served in Christ's kingdom, hence their soul life had died. If I am to be your friend, I must serve you where I can. I may not be able to give you large sums of money, but I can give you sympathy, I can speak a good word for you, I can do whatever my ability allows; and no more is needed. If we are to be Christ's friends, the fundamental law of our being demands that we serve. We cannot disregard this law and grow in friendship. We may not be able to preach a great sermon, or lead with power in public prayer or give great sums of money to missions, but we can stand as a witness for Christ; we can invite a friend to go with us to Church; we can help a friend to form the habit of daily Bible study. We can do whatever our ability allows, and nothing more is required.

I think this is the authentic sign and seal  
Of Godship, that it ever waxes glad  
And more glad, until gladness blossoms, bursts  
Into a rage to suffer for mankind,  
And recommence at sorrow: drops like seed  
After the blossom, ultimate of all.  
Say, does the seed-corn scorn earth and seek the sun?  
Surely it has no other end and aim  
Than to drop, once more to die, into the ground,  
Taste cold and darkness and oblivion there:  
And thence rise, treelike, grow through pain to joy,  
More joy, most joy—do man good again.  
—Browning's "*Balaustion's Adventure*."



## STUDY II.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WHEN A MAN BECOMES A  
CHRISTIAN.

## STUDY II. WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WHEN A MAN BECOMES A CHRISTIAN.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John iii. 6.)

"For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace: . . . But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. viii. 6, 11.)

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### PART I. CONVERSION.

SOME time or other a man wakes up to the fact that he is wrong, that he has lived without reference to the will of his Father, God; he deliberately makes up his mind that he will come to God and ask forgiveness; he deliberately gives himself over to a friendly attitude toward that Fatherly person; by his life and expressions he declares that he is trying to live on friendly terms with God; by the service of his life he begins to lead others into this friendly relationship—and we say he is converted.

Perhaps this change in his life has been a sudden break; perhaps his former life has been openly rebellious. Then we say he has had a marvelous change. Or perhaps this change has been gradual; perhaps it has not been the changing of his direction of life, but simply his awakening, when he deliberately faces the facts, to the consciousness of a deeper meaning in the things he has been doing. Perhaps it is just a conscious and deliberate acceptance as his own of the fellowship of Christ which has always been the atmosphere of his being. In any case, it is an awakening to reality, a deliberate choosing of a life program. When a man assumes this

new attitude, he is by that very fact a Christian. He has put himself into such an attitude that God is able to forgive him and take him back into his approving love.

"To be converted," says Prof. William James, "to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain an assurance—are so many phrases which denote the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided and consciously wrong, inferior, and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right, superior, and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold on religious realities."<sup>1</sup>

In Study I. we have attempted to show that the steps by which one enters the Christian life are perfectly natural steps. Religious life is not something apart, but is the whole being going out to God, in accordance with the very laws by which we live our lives of human friendship.

When one becomes a Christian (if you wish to use the word), when one becomes converted, when one deliberately puts himself into the presence of God with the desire to live the God life, something has really happened. If nothing really happens, if we are not different after we become Christians, if some new dynamic has not entered our lives—then all talk about religion is twaddle. If, however, something has actually happened, and we have a new power and a new life, every man wants this thing we call religion. If we can show that religion makes a real difference, we have made it binding for all men. In this Study let us face this question frankly.

*Meditation:* If you are a Christian, can you tell what actually did happen in your case? If not a Christian, what are you expecting to happen? Do not be satisfied with general terms, but make your thought specific.

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<sup>1</sup>"Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 189.

## STUDY II. WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WHEN A MAN BECOMES A CHRISTIAN.

“Create in me a clean heart, O God;  
And renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from thy presence;  
And take not thy Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;  
And uphold me with a willing spirit.” (Ps. li. 10-12.)

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.” (Isa. i. 18, 19.)

“But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation. We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God.” (2 Cor. v. 18-20.)

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### PART 2. SENSE OF ESTRANGEMENT REMOVED.

ONE of the most serious results of sin is the fact that it estranges the sinner from the person against whom the wrong has been committed. As soon as you have wronged or injured another you at once begin to shun him; you will walk a whole block not to meet him. It is very unpleasant to be thrown in his presence. A great barrier has been raised. This feeling of estrangement makes one afraid even to ask forgiveness. Once, when I was at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi, a fine fellow became a Christian at one of the meetings. The next morning he came to my room and threw down before me a stamped

envelope addressed to his father, and asked me to write his father telling of his changed life. When asked why he did not write himself, he said that he did not feel that he could because his life had been so sinful, and he and his father had been so deeply estranged.

Sin breaks up the harmony of friendship between man and God. When a man turns back and asks forgiveness, this estrangement is at once removed. The way is opened up for a genuine communion. We are so accustomed to measure the guilt of sin by its physical results that we often overlook the fact that the removal of this sense of estrangement is the most vital and fundamental result of the soul's turning from sin.

The removal of estrangement at once creates in the soul of a man a feeling of oneness with God. The dawn of a God consciousness is therefore one of the fundamental results of a man's deliberate giving himself to the Christian fellowship.

"When the sense of estrangement," writes Professor Lueba, "fencing man about in a narrowly limited ego breaks down, the individual finds himself 'at one with all creation.' He lives in the universal life; he and man, he and nature, he and God are one."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted from "Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 247.

## STUDY II. WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WHEN A MAN BECOMES A CHRISTIAN.

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil. i. 21.)

"Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is from God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead." (Phil. iii. 8-11.)

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### PART 3. THE CHANGE FROM A SELF-CENTERED TO A GOD-CENTERED LIFE.

THE center of the non-Christian life is the ego. The philosophy of this life is self-preservation and self-development. Even the best of the non-Christian religions are self-centered. They turn the thought of the worshiper in upon himself, so that salvation in these religions is a selfish release or freedom from punishment. So deep is this matter of self ingrained in us that we are scarcely able to shake ourselves free from it. So long as one continues to be completely self-centered there can be no friendship, for friendship means the giving up of self, the surrender of one's life to another life. It means the submerging of our good in the larger good of two lives.

When a man deliberately yields himself to the friendship of Christ, somehow he ceases to be a self-centered man and becomes a God-centered man. The man who before thought only of himself now begins to think about the things in which God is interested. A big athlete in one of our colleges was accustomed to laugh at missions as the work of fanatics.



But one day he was converted. He became a follower of Christ, and at once began to wonder why he should not go out to the non-Christian lands to preach the gospel. Something had happened in his life: whereas before he was selfish, now he was unselfish; whereas he was planning for his own pleasure, now he forgot himself in service for others. It is a mighty change which takes a life directed for years in one selfish channel and suddenly turns it in an exactly opposite direction. This is a fact which no scientific mind can pass over lightly. What has happened?

The psychologist says that by a sudden emotion or otherwise the life has become organized around a new nervous center; that the old channels of thought have been walled up; and that the self has become identified with a new world, where newer and broader channels of thought must be found. This seems perfectly plausible; indeed, I think it is the way in which the change comes about. But what makes that change? Why should religion and religion alone make this completely new center of nervous life?

The religious man knows what has happened. Somehow, doubtless according to the laws of psychology—for God works according to law, though not necessarily according to what man conceives to be law—somehow God has touched the soul of a man, and all things have become new. His very thoughts move in different channels. The very channels of his old thought have been inhibited—walled up, to put it in untechnical terms—and his life flows out in an entirely different direction. It is a marvelous thing to take a self-centered, self-indulgent, self-loving soul and turn it round into a God-centered, self-sacrificing, service-loving life. And yet that is what happens when men become Christians.

Who that one moment has the least desried him

Dimly and faintly, hidden and afar,

Doth not despise all excellence beside him,

Pleasures and powers that are not and that are

—Myers's "*St. Paul*."

## STUDY II. WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WHEN A MAN BECOMES A CHRISTIAN.

"For thou hast made him but little lower than God,  
And crownest him with glory and honor.  
Thou makest him to have dominion over the work of thy hands  
Thou has put all things under his feet." (Ps. viii. 5, 6.)

"The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him." (Rom. viii. 16, 17.)

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### PART 4. A NEW APPRECIATION OF THE SELF.

ONE of the most marked results of the Christian life is the new appreciation which the Christian has of his own life. This seems almost to contradict the last section of our study, where we saw a man forgetting himself in service for others. But the two conceptions are entirely compatible. The Christian man at once sees the larger significance of his own life and its power for service. "It seems that the heightened worth of self and the altruistic impulses in conversion are closely bound up together, and the differences between them lie simply in the different content of consciousness, determined by the direction in which it is turned. The central fact underlying both is the formation of a new ego, a fresh point of reference for mental states."<sup>1</sup> In a later study we shall discuss the new valuation which Christianity gives to humanity at large. Here we are concerned with the Christian man finding a new and exalted selfhood.

St. Paul at once saw that this new friendship related him directly to God and to Jesus Christ. He became a joint heir with Christ. This gave a new dignity and a new meaning to his whole personality. He was at once an heir and a co-worker with Christ.

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<sup>1</sup>Starbuck's "Psychology of Religion," p. 129.

Just this same new appreciation of life comes to men to-day when they become friends of Jesus Christ. One of my good friends told me of such a change in his life. He had been planning to do a certain thing in life—honorable, but not large or commanding. Suddenly he awoke to the meaning of the Christ friendship—he became a Christian. After that his old ambition seemed to him entirely too small to satisfy. He immediately went to college to fit himself for a much larger career, which he has for some years been filling with great success. Suddenly a new ambition was created within him. Suddenly he began to realize that a larger thing was possible for him. Suddenly his own life took on a new meaning and new responsibilities. Something had really happened.

The psychologist explains this new appreciation of self, the exaltation of the ego, as the coming into consciousness of new centers of nervous activity. To quote Professor Starbuck again: "It is as if brain areas which had lain dormant had now suddenly come into activity—as if their stored-up energy had been liberated, and now began to function."<sup>2</sup> Later Professor Starbuck goes on to say that this latent or stored-up nervous energy might have lain dormant forever had not a religious awakening released it. Our observation goes to prove that precisely this is what is happening in thousands of cases to-day. Men are using only a part of their splendid capacities because they have never felt the contagion of the God life, which kindles into flame the smoldering embers of spiritual energy.

Something actually happens when a man suddenly awakes to the larger reaches of his own person. The psychologist has rendered us a great service in showing us just how the touch of the God life brings into the realm of conscious activity the latent energies of our soul.

*Meditation:* Are you living in such close conscious fellowship with God as to have all your powers of mind and heart alert and active? Are you satisfied with less than your best?

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<sup>2</sup>Starbuck's "Psychology of Religion," p. 132.

## STUDY II. WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WHEN A MAN BECOMES A CHRISTIAN.

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would. But if ye are led by the Spirit ye are not under the law." (Gal. v. 17, 18.)

"Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I of myself with the mind, indeed, serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." (Rom. vii. 24, 25.)

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### PART 5. UNIFICATION OF PERSONALITY.

ONE of the most intense realities of life is the fact of struggle, the battle between the lower nature and the higher nature; or, if you please to put it so, the tug of two opposing worlds within the soul. All men are conscious of this double personality. This struggle, in which the lower nature seemed most frequently victorious, St. Paul expresses in the familiar phrase: "The good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practice." (Rom. vii. 19).

Now the psychologist accounts for this divided personality by the fact that the personality is dominated at different times by sets of ideas often diametrically opposed in tendency. These opposing sets of ideas, rising into consciousness, struggle to overcome each other, and a man finds himself drawn in two opposite directions. Groups of ideas concerned with good and evil, respectively, cause the most intense struggle because they are so absolutely and uncompromisingly opposed to each other. Hence it arises that the decision to become a Christian man may be accompanied with the most terrific battle that a man ever fights. It is the attempt of the Godward ideas to assume complete dominance over the evilward ideas. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh."

When a man becomes a Christian he deliberately puts the power of his will on the side of the Godward ideas. He exalts them into the place of supremacy. He deliberately re-

fuses to allow the opposite ideas to control. He deliberately makes up his mind that these lower centers of thought energy shall not have a central place in his consciousness. "It makes a great difference," says Professor James, "to a man whether one set of his ideas or another be the center of his energy; and it makes a great difference as regards any set of ideas which he may possess, whether they become central or remain peripheral in him. To say that a man is 'converted' means, in these terms, that religious ideals previously peripheral [on the outer edge, dim, indistinct] in his consciousness now take a central place, and that religious aims form the habitual center of his energy."<sup>2</sup>

This is the psychological process of the formation of the new Christian life. The real thing which has happened is the touch of the soul of a personal God on the sensitive soul of a man in such manner that the very center of his being is changed. Somehow the ideas of God-consciousness move into the central field of life, and by the marvelous power of the touch of God they are strong enough to hold sway. The battle may not be over, the old ideas may rise up again to find expression, but the real controlling power of the life is the God-consciousness.

A college man I knew, who was a degraded, helpless drunkard, walked into the Jerry McAuley Mission one night to beg money, with which he meant to buy whisky. He heard the simple testimonies of how God had helped other men to break this awful habit. He made up his mind to try it. He gave his life to God that night. Four nights later I heard that man give his simple testimony at the meeting. He said: "I came into this house four nights ago a helpless, hopeless drunkard. I had not been completely sober for many, many months. I gave my life to God, and, men, for four days and nights I have been a sober man, even though before I would have gone through hell to get a drink of whisky." The years have passed, and the testimony is still true.

From a personality "which was divided, consciously wrong, inferior, and unhappy," he became a personality "which was unified, consciously right, superior, and happy," because a new God-consciousness had dawned in his life and had taken the central place in his being. Something had really happened.

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<sup>2</sup>"Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 196.

## STUDY II. WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WHEN A MAN BECOMES A CHRISTIAN.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law." (Gal. v. 22, 23.)

"For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. xiv. 17.)

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### PART 6. A NEW SPIRIT OF KINDLINESS TOWARD MEN.

THE test of a life is its attitude toward those with whom it is associated. If I claim to be a Christian, and yet continually criticise and find fault with my companions in social life, every man sees the hypocrisy of my profession. If I have no control of my temper, but am constantly flying into a rage with my associates in social life, class room, or athletic field, I am not exhibiting the fruits of Christian experience. The fruit of the Christ friendship is the friendly life. If one does not find himself growing into an increasing friendliness for men, if he is not more sympathetic and kindly in spirit, then he is not giving the Christ life a chance to mold his character.

This new kindliness of spirit is precisely what men do experience when they become followers of Christ. In the responses concerning their religious experience, which Professor Starbuck's questionnaire elicited, I find the following: Case 1, "The change made me very affectionate, while before I was very cold to my parents; case 2, "I felt it my duty after that to be polite and sympathetic. My enemies were changed into friends;" case 3, "I spoke at once to a person with whom I had been angry."

A new element has come into human life which makes it more sympathetic, more kindly, more gracious. Montgomery in his poem, "The Watchman," makes the captain of the guard at Christ's tomb say that seeing Christ had transformed his entire being.

I care no more for glory; all desire  
For honor and for strife is gone from me,  
All eagerness for war. I only care  
To help and save bruised beings, and to give  
Some comfort to the weak and suffering;  
I cannot even hate those Jews; my lips  
Speak harshly of them, but within my heart  
I only feel compassion; and I love  
All creatures to the vilest of the slaves,  
Who seem to me as brothers. Claudia,  
Scorn me not for this weakness; it will pass—  
Surely 'twill pass in time and I shall be  
Maximus, strong and valiant once again  
Forgetting that slain god. And yet—and yet—  
He looked as one who could not be forgot!

## STUDY II. WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WHEN A MAN BECOMES A CHRISTIAN.

"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Cor. ii. 2.)

"Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ." (Phil. iii. 8.)

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### PART 7. A NEW CENTER OF LOYALTY.

GROWING out of these new elements that enter into the new man, and partly at least the basis of these new forces, is the sense of loyalty which arises in the really religious soul. We talk much of religious devotion, but I prefer the word loyalty, because it is more personal. It denotes our connection with a person outside ourselves. It is precisely this personal loyalty that every man needs—something to take him outside himself, something that gathers up his scattered energies, some one in whose cause man can lose himself. Many a man is wasting his life in mere twaddle because he has never found an ideal great enough or a personality attractive enough wholly to command him. The one salvation for hundreds of men will be to find outside themselves a great, absorbing life which will unify their powers and give them a cause large enough to draw out all their latent energies. "If you want to find a way of living," says Professor Royce, "which surmounts doubt and centralizes your powers, it must be some such way as all the loyal in common have trodden since first loyalty was known among men."<sup>1</sup>

Professor William James points out that there are in every

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<sup>1</sup>"Philosophy of Loyalty," p. 46.



man a great many restricting and retarding forces. He calls them inhibitions. These inhibitions are the forces which constantly say "No" when we are about to undertake a hard thing. They account for our moods of vacillation and weakness. The only thing that will break down these obstructions is a great passion. "Given a certain amount of love, indignation, generosity, magnanimity, admiration, loyalty, enthusiasm of self-surrender, the result is always the same. That whole raft of cowardly obstructions which in tame persons and dull moods are sovereign impediments to action, sink away at once."<sup>2</sup>

It is precisely this which happens when one centers his attention on the supreme personality of the universe as he is revealed in Jesus Christ. There comes into his life the motive power of a new affection. In a man like St. Paul this loyalty becomes a consuming passion\* which sweeps every lower ideal before it. This kind of loyalty sets for us a worthy life task, gives us strength to live for it, and heartens us as we labor. Labor is transformed in the presence of such a passion, and even pain becomes suffused with something akin to joy if it is incurred in the pathway of loyalty to the central person of the universe.

He who finds himself weak and vacillating, who finds the battles of temptation all too hard, who feels himself lacking in decision and concentration needs to throw his life into the Christian life with complete abandon, for in the whole-souled friendship of Jesus Christ there is power for new life. He who knows that friendship has had something happen within him which makes him a new man.

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<sup>2</sup>"Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 266.



### STUDY III.

THE DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY.  
(47)

### STUDY III. THE DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY.

"He hath cast off thy calf, O Samaria; mine anger is kindled against them: how long will it be ere they attain to innocency? For from Israel is even this; the workman made it, and it is no God; yea, the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces." (Hosea viii. 5, 6.)

"For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse: because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened." (Rom. i. 20, 21.)

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#### PART I. THE GOD OF THE NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS.

IN order to understand clearly the uniqueness of the Christian message it is necessary to set forth very briefly the message of the non-Christian faiths. It will be necessary to do full credit to these religions if we are to have a fair understanding of the supremacy of Christianity. Surely every religion has much of good in it, for it represents, in part at least, the striving of the Spirit of God with these people, as he has attempted to lead all men to himself. "The scientists," says Professor Knox, "may ignore the wisdom of Asia, but the Christian cannot ignore its faiths. He must consider their claim and compare them with his own." Perhaps we shall find that this comparison will be the greatest proof of the supremacy of Christ's gospel.

As a religion is determined by its conception of God, let us first see what these non-Christian faiths have to say concerning this ultimate reality.

Islam holds firmly to a personal Being, who is the divine and final person in the universe. "There is no God but

God," is the battle cry of the Mohammedan. In the fact of a personal God, Islam is like unto Christianity, but in the characteristics of that God they stand far apart. Christianity believes in a God who is self-existent, has free will, but always acts in accordance with his own highest self. Islam, on the other hand, sets forth a God who is self-existent, has a free will, acts in entirely arbitrary fashion, without any regard for self-consistency. The Mohammedan God is therefore one without consistency, or, one may almost say, without real morality; for no person who is arbitrary can be completely moral. Of the ninety-nine names given to the God of Islam, there is none that denotes the idea of fatherhood or tender care. He is absolutely separate and distinct from the world and touches it only according to caprice, not according to any law of self-consistency. Such a God, supremely worthy in its conception of unity, which opposes all polytheism and destroys all idol worship, can hardly satisfy the longings of the human soul for fellowship with the divine.

### STUDY III. THE DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY.

“And he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.” (Acts xvii. 26-28.)

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#### PART 2. THE GOD OF THE NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS (Continued).

TURNING from Mohammedanism to Hinduism, we immediately come into an entirely different realm of thought. Mohammed held to a God of distinct personality and complete unity. While the Hindu religion from time to time declares its God to be personal, it is a personality far different from anything we know. He is the sole essence and reality of the universe, the unity pervading all things. Beside him there is no other reality. “There is no second outside of him, no other distinct from him,” is the set formula of the Hindu faith. This does not mean that there is no other God beside him; it means that there is no other reality beside him.

There is in this conception the fundamental truth of the unity of life, the interrelatedness of all being; but there is the fundamental error of leaving out of account all human personality. If there is no other beside God, then I am a mere dream, a shadow, a delusion. This being so, it is made impossible for me to know that that is so; for my mind, which tells me it is so, is not real, has no existence.

The Buddhist conception goes still further and denies not only the reality of man but the reality of God. There is no reality; all is change and decay and delusion. "It is an essential doctrine," says Rhys Davids, perhaps the greatest authority on Buddhism—"It is an essential doctrine, constantly insisted upon in the original Buddhist texts and still held, so far as I have been able to ascertain, by all Buddhists, that there is nothing, either divine or human, either animal or vegetable or material, which is *permanent*. There is no *being*; there is only a *becoming*."<sup>1</sup>

*Personal Thought:* Reflect for a moment to-day on what the value of religion would be to you if you were convinced of the truth of the doctrine of these religions—that is, that there is no such thing as a human person; that you are simply deluded when you think you exist.

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<sup>1</sup>"Am. Lectures," p. 121.

### STUDY III. THE DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY.

"And as for thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, whom thou shalt have; of the nations that are round about you, of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids." (Lev. xxv. 44.)

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#### PART 3. VALUATION OF MAN IN THE NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS.

ACCORDING to Islam, man is not akin to God; he does not partake of his nature and essence; neither, indeed, is such a thing desirable. Man is the creature of God; he is absolutely dependent upon his Creator in everything. While theoretically he is a moral agent, practically he cannot be, for God has fixed his fate long before man comes into being. One Mohammedan writer has put it thus:

When fate has come, man cannot it avert;  
Fate fails not, should he mind and sight exert.  
Beyond the Lord's decree, writ by his pen,  
Nor less nor more comes to his servants, men.

This conception at once takes from man all his dignity and worth. He is simply a puppet in the hands of an arbitrary God. The Hindu and Buddhist conception is far less satisfactory. According to the former, man has no distinct existence, but is simply an emanation from the divine, to which he will sooner or later return. He is not responsible, for whatever he does is the deed of the all-pervading God. This at once cuts the nerve of all high endeavor. Buddhism goes further and denies man any existence whatever. Man is simply a shadow, or, to be more exact, he is just the result of the stored-up energy of past deeds and desires. Desire, lust, longing—these are the efficient cause of existence. If



I do not put away all desire, when my being disintegrates, another being must come into existence to live out the result of the stored-up energy of my desires and deeds (karma). The horror of life, therefore, is rebirth in another form, to have new desires, only to give birth to a new existence. Man, therefore, is a creature bound to the eternal round of decay and rebirth in endless and monotonous succession. Salvation, as we shall see later, is the getting free from this wheel of destiny, the stopping of this monotonous succession of rebirths.

These conceptions do not dignify manhood. Hence in these countries the common man is nothing; he is simply a slave. Only the man who has fortune or some temporal blessing can be worthy of notice. Man is valuable not because of what he essentially is but because of something he possesses.

Religions which have no more exalted ideas of man are not apt to make provision for a very worthy salvation.

### STUDY III. THE DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY.

“Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,  
And cleanse me from my sin.  
For I know my transgressions;  
And my sin is ever before me.  
Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,  
And done that which is evil in thy sight;  
That thou mayest be justified when thou speakest,  
And be clear when thou judgest.” (Ps. li. 2-4.)

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#### PART 4. CONCEPTION OF SIN IN THE NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS.

No non-Christian religion has such a note of personal sin as that in the reference just quoted, Psalm li. 2-4.

Every religion, so far as I am aware, takes account of a man's consciousness of sin—that is, recognizes that man is out of harmony with his truer self and his environment. The form which this conception of sin takes varies greatly.

The Mohammedan conception of sin is nearest to that of Christianity. Here sin is a transgression of the will of God, and hence personal. The fundamental weakness of the conception lies in the fact that this will of God is purely arbitrary and not necessarily in conformity to any fundamental law of right or wrong. In other words, while Mohammedan sin is personal, it is the transgression of the whimsical commands of an arbitrary God. Thus, as a Mohammedan expressed it to a missionary: “If I use tobacco, God may damn me; but if I murder or commit adultery, God may be merciful.” This at once throws sin into the realm of arbitrary codes and does away with its most heinous aspect—the non-conformity to a holy and loving will of a self-consistent God.

According to Hinduism, since there is no personal God, there can be no such thing as nonconformity to his will; so sin in the Christian sense is unknown. Also, in view of the fact that God is all and in all, and nothing exists beside him, all deeds are simply the deeds of the God, and hence cannot be sinful. There can be no such thing as personal transgression. In spite, however, of this philosophic unreality of sin, the Hindu religion has much to say about it. Somehow the sense of sin cannot be set aside. The chief sin is the affirmation of personal, separate existence. Thought of personality is a delusion and an error out of which arises all suffering. It is this which gives rise to karma (the influence which lives on in a new birth), which condemns one to perpetual rebirths.

Buddhist sin is closely akin to that of Hinduism. Since there is no such thing as permanent existence, either human or divine, since all is change, the chief sin is to harbor the delusion of personal existence. The first fetter which holds man from entering the eightfold path of peace is sakkaya ditthi, the delusion of self.

From this very brief statement one immediately sees that sin has no such terror for the non-Christian peoples as it has for those of the Christian faith. Sin with them is error, delusion, failure; with Christianity it is personal, willful transgression.

### STUDY III. THE DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY.

“And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful: who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practice them.” (Rom. i. 28-32.)

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#### PART 5. STANDARDS OF MORALITY IN NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS.

It cannot be doubted that the non-Christian religions have many splendid moral precepts. We have paid little attention to Confucianism in these studies, but here one ought to say that the Confucian standard of morals is high. The golden rule, though expressed negatively, the high reverence for parents, the inculcation of virtue, courage, benevolence, loyalty—all these are splendid. But in Confucianism God is ignored, woman is degraded, polygamy sanctioned, and no power is given whereby the other virtues may be attained. China, leprous with sin and degradation, is a full and sufficient answer to Confucian ethics as a final system.

Mohammedanism inculcates the highest reverence for God, mercy to captives, charity to the needy, patience in hardships, sobriety, and kindness. These are all well worth while. But side by side with these precepts it inculcates the most bitter cruelty to, and persecution of, non-believers; slavery is directly and positively sanctioned; lying to women justified;

woman is degraded and made a tool of man's lust, and even heaven itself is a land where every man may have unnumbered houris to minister to his debased passion. No one who reads the Koran, much less any one who views the practical outcome of the Mohammedan code of morals, can find any final standard there.

Hindu moral codes differ with the numerous sects, but on the whole it may be said that all alike teach self-control, truthfulness, and the sanctity of the marriage relation. The more cultured sect, following the Bhagavad-Gita as their sacred book, may be said to have a fair code of morals. But no religion can pose as having a final standard for morals which sets up in its temples carvings which are such a travesty of morality and decency that no Christian woman can visit the temple. Nor can it hope to have much moral power when its gods in incarnate form are notorious as thieves and licentious beyond measure, and a part of its sacred books must be condemned by the English government as obscene literature.

In Buddhism there is the most utter confusion of essentials and nonessentials. Thus, sleeping on a trundle-bed is put side by side with hatred, pride, self-righteousness. Morality is a code and not a principle. Not only so, but all basis for morality is cut from beneath a Buddhist's feet, for he believes in neither self nor God, and there can be no moral duty for either.

None of these religions can satisfy our sense of moral life. They are the morals of a stationary code, and cannot meet the needs of growing life.

STUDY III. THE DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE OF  
CHRISTIANITY.

What grief  
Springs of itself and springs not of desire?  
Senses and things perceived mingle and light  
Passion's quick spark of fire.

This is peace :  
To conquer love of self and lust of life,  
To tear deep-rooted passion from the breast,  
To still this inward strife.

*Arnold's "The Light of Asia."*

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PART 6. CONCEPTION OF SALVATION IN NON-CHRIS-  
TIAN RELIGIONS.

By the word salvation we do not here refer specially to the future life. This is simply a resultant of salvation. Salvation is what a religion proposes to do for us here and now.

In accordance with the Mohammedan idea of sin, as the transgression of the arbitrary mandate of God—often without regard to the fundamental conception of right and wrong—the result of sin is disfavor, but not guilt. Sin does not have the quality of guilt which it has for Christians. Hence Mohammedan salvation is not forgiveness but indulgence; not freedom from guilt, but freedom from punishment. A man who still has a murderous heart may gain entrance into paradise, if only God pleases to be indulgent. Personal holiness is not inculcated as the goal for Mohammedan character.

According to Hinduism, the supreme evil of life is this embodied existence which continually returns in a new-embodied form. To get rid of this round of rebirth, to get away from embodied existence, to be reabsorbed into the divine, is the one conception of salvation. This can be attained only

by the complete denial of the self, with all its desires and passions. Hence salvation is the going out of the fires of life.

Buddhism is much akin to this. It also seeks freedom from embodied existence. It is necessary thereto that a man extinguish all desire, all passion, all thought ; then he will pass out of this deluded state into nirvana, the state where he is at rest and without desire, without anxiety. Finally, when this present embodied existence is dissolved, he will simply be snuffed out ; he will have attained extinction (parra-nibbana). This is final and complete salvation. It is simply a nihilism.

STUDY III. THE DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE OF  
CHRISTIANITY.

How many births are past I cannot tell;  
How many births to come no man can say.  
But this alone I know and know full well,  
That pain and grief embitter all the way.  
—*South India Folk Song.*

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## PART 7. DO THE NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS SATISFY?

WE have very briefly set forth the non-Christian conceptions of God, man, sin, morality, salvation, and we must now ask in conclusion: Do these religions satisfy the souls of men? "The religious problem," says Professor Knox, "is: Given man, dependent and ignorant, with feelings, fears, hopes, hatreds, loves, in the midst of he knows not what dangers and difficulties; how shall he be triumphant over fear and sin and death? How shall he live in peace and make existence not only endurable but worthy? Thus, though some may regret it, the direct and fundamental proofs of our religion can be found only in its satisfaction of the cravings of the soul, and by its adaptation to the highest wants of society through its ethical activities."<sup>1</sup>

Measured by these standards, do the non-Christian religions prove adequate? The supreme craving in every human soul is for fellowship with a higher kindred power. Browning has well voiced this hunger of the soul in his splendid words in "Pauline:—"

The last point I can trace is, rest, beneath  
Some better essence than itself, in weakness;

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<sup>1</sup>"Direct and Fundamental Proofs of the Christian Religion," pp. 156 and 173.



This is "myself," not what I think should be:  
 And what is that I hunger for but God?  
 My God, my God, let me for once look on thee  
 As though naught else existed, we alone.  
 And as creation crumbles, my soul's spark  
 Expands till I can say: "Even from myself  
 I need thee and I feel thee and I love thee."  
 I do not plead my rapture in thy works  
 For love of thee, nor that I feel as one  
 Who cannot die: but there is that in me  
 Which turns to thee, which loves or which should love.

Which one of the religions which we have discussed can meet this test? Islam cannot, for its God is a capricious, austere, absentee ruler who cares naught for human life. Buddhism cannot, for it denies the existence of any God at all. Hinduism, though its contemplative method comes nearer than any other, cuts off any final satisfaction, for there cannot be any real communion, since there are no persons to enter into that relationship. There is only one; that is God, and even his is not a person, but a vague, pantheistic essence that pervades the universe.

Those who have studied the peoples in the mission fields tell us that the souls of these men are hungry. There is a great unrest, a great longing which finds no final satisfaction through the non-Christian faiths. That these religions have value cannot be doubted; but that they are not able to meet the needs of men is equally clear to any careful student.



#### STUDY IV.

THE DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY.

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## STUDY IV. THE DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” (John xiv. 23.)

“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. . . . Yet I taught Ephraim to walk; I took them on my arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that lift up the yoke on their jaws; and I laid food before them. . . . How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I cast thee off, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboiim? My heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together. . . . I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man: the Holy One in the midst of thee; and I will not come in wrath.” (Hos. xi. 1, 3, 4, 8, 9.)

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John iv. 24.)

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### PART I. THE CHRISTIAN'S CONCEPTION OF GOD.

WE have seen the failure of the non-Christian religions. In perfect fairness of spirit we must now inquire whether Christianity has any better religious message. Let us turn to the Christian conception of God. A later study will attempt to justify this conception.

First of all, the God of Christianity is personal—that is, he is a conscious being, possessed of intelligence, will, and emotional life which enables him to be related with other beings. To say that God is personal does not mean that he is limited, for the Christian conception (that presented by the New Testament) distinctly denies all limitation. He is complete in intelligence, will, and emotional possibilities. He knows all

truth; he is able at all times to control his actions. He always does that which is worthy.

Not only is God personal, but he is self-consistent. He cannot act otherwise than in accordance with his own nature—that is, in accordance with the reasonableness and essential truth in things. There is no arbitrariness here, no whimsical capriciousness. His character (and character inheres only in personality; nothing else has character) is righteously self-consistent.

Still further, Christianity sets forth the conception of a God who is a Father, and who sustains toward men the loving relation of Fatherhood. No other religion outside Christianity has such a conception. Judaism has it in embryo, though not well developed. This Father is ambitious to give to each child his largest and truest life. To this end he cares for each individual human soul, and nothing touches the life of man which does not touch also the heart of God. God is no absentee Creator of the universe who sits outside the universe and sees it go. He is intimately connected with the daily and hourly movements in the world. Although distinct in personality, yet he pervades all life in a more real sense than the life of my friend pervades my life when we are in conscious communion.

Thus he dwells in all  
From life's minute beginnings up at last  
To man—the consummation of this scheme of being.  
—*Browning's "Paracelsus."*

## STUDY IV. THE DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY.

"Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me?" (John viii. 46.)

"And Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that beholdeth me, beholdeth him that sent me." (John xii. 44, 45.)

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world." (John xi. 25-27.)

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt xi. 28-30.)

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## PART 2. WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

WE can state here only in the barest outline the Christian conception of Christ. A later study will attempt to justify this conception.

Jesus believed himself to be the one perfect man. Neither in his consciousness nor in the consciousness of his disciples do we find any indication that he ever sinned.

He believed himself to hold a unique relation to his Father, God. Again and again he asserted that he was the messenger sent from God to reveal to men the meaning of life.

He believed that the world would be judged by the standard of his own life.

He believed that there was within himself that which would satisfy the longings of the human soul.

"It is not by chance that Christianity centers in Jesus Christ and that he is accounted God and man. For thus the highest expression of truth is found in a person. If God be Father and man be his son, if self-giving love for the highest benefit of others be the supreme principle of their common nature, then the religious and ethical aspects of our faith are summed up in him. His life and his death reveal this love as supreme, and that is the final end of man. To that Christ appeals, to that he likens his Father, and that he asks from men as the condition of discipleship. Man becomes through perfect service the complete expression of God. So that the Christian finds the true symbol of his faith not in any abstract principle of the nature of the Infinite, but in him who went about doing good, and gave his life that his brethren also might become sons of God."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"Direct and Fundamental Proofs of the Christian Religion," pp. 190, 191.

#### STUDY IV. THE DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY.

"And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them," (Gen. i. 27.)

"And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as streams of water in a dry place, as the shade of a great rock in a weary land." (Isa. xxxii. 2.)

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing." (John xv. 5.)

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#### PART 3. WHO IS MAN?

ACCORDING to Christianity man is a self-conscious, free moral being, made in God's likeness, and capable of understanding, at least in part, the works and manifestations of God.

No other religion gives to man such high dignity as does Christianity. Here he is represented not only as created in the image of God but he is known as the friend and companion of God. Jesus was interested in every type of humanity—the Samaritan woman at the well, the poor, blind beggar at the roadside, the scarlet woman who slipped into the banquet hall and anointed his feet, the learned and respectable Nicodemus, the degraded taxgatherer Levi-Matthew, who was willing to make his living out of exorbitant taxes extorted from his fellow-countrymen—in all these he was intensely interested.

Jesus was no pretender. He was no flatterer. He was interested in these people because he saw in them something genuinely worth while. As Dr. Bosworth points out: "He



represented this interest in human personality as not peculiar to himself but as shared by God and heaven."<sup>1</sup>

Now man is sacred because he is essentially akin to God, because there is a Godhead within him. Sin disfigures the image of God in man. It often lies dormant and undeveloped because of lack of attention, but the essential Godhead remains. One of the most remarkable things about Christ is his ability to see this kinship in the life of a man beneath all the veneer of poverty, ignorance, and sin.

Perhaps the most marked characteristic of our time is our new appreciation of the value and sacredness of human personality. Indeed this is the very basis of our great social awakening, and both of these in turn are the outgrowth of the more careful understanding and interpretation of the message of Christ.

Let all harmonies  
Of sound, form, color, motion, wait upon  
The princely guest, whether in the soft attire  
Of leisure clad, or the coarse frock of toil,  
And lending life to the dead form of faith,  
Give human nature reverence for the sake  
Of one who bore it, making it divine  
With the ineffable tenderness of God;  
Let common need, the brotherhood of prayer,  
The heirship of an unknown destiny,  
The unsolved mystery round about us  
Make a man more precious than the gold of Ophir.  
—Whittier's "*Among the Hills*."

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<sup>1</sup>"Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles," p. 115.

## STUDY IV. THE DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY.

"Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." (1 John iii. 4.)

"Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bond servant of sin." (John viii. 34.)

"For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. vi. 23.)

"To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (Jas. iv. 17.)

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### PART 4. WHAT IS SIN?

JESUS says that the whole law can be summed up in love for God and love for our fellow-men. Sin is defined in the New Testament as the transgression of the law—that is, sin is disregard of God and of my fellow-men. St. Paul says: "He that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law." (Rom. xiii. 8.)

John speaks of the sinner as being a bond servant, as being under dominion. Sin must be a principle of the soul, a motive of life, an intention. It does not necessarily express itself in an act. Christ spoke of it as a desire of the heart, whether gratified or not. Evidently sin is something that goes to the very roots of a man's being. It is fundamental.

Perhaps we may define it as a person's deliberate attitude, act, or principle of life, which is in nonconformity with the will of God. It is putting my will over in opposition to the known will of God. In other words, the sinful life is the self-centered life; the righteous life is the God-centered life.

Selfishness, then, is the root of sin. It is that unwillingness to love God and men and live on friendly terms with them, which attitude renders one incapable of thinking of the interest of others. Sin, therefore, is a great isolator. He who will not think of others cannot live a social life. He banishes himself. But personality can live only through association with others. The very term personality denotes social relationships. Hence the sinful, selfish man cuts

himself off from that on which his life depends. "The soul that sinneth it shall die."

All sin brings with it a sense of guilt, a sense of personal blameworthiness. This is not liability for punishment, not even the fear of punishment; it is the responsibility which rests upon one when he has committed a sin. From this sense of guilt all men seek to be free.

After I had spoken on Sunday at the University of Iowa, a man came to my room at the hotel to talk with me about his life. He started by telling me he had not come to talk religion. Then he told me that he was a Jew, but did not believe there was a God or that there was any reality in sin. He then told me that he had done a certain thing (a heinous sin, though he did not name it so), that he had left his home to escape punishment and had finally entered the university. "Now," said he, "what I want to know is, Will it be all right if I live like a gentleman from now on?"

Looking straight at him I said: "How long did you say you have been in the university?"

"Three years."

"And have you tried to be a gentleman all these years?"

His eyes flashed fire as he said: "I certainly have."

"Well," said I, "Is it all, all right?"

For a moment he seemed dazed, and then, leaning forward, he said: O but the memory of that awful deed; how can I get rid of it?"

That is the sense of guilt consequent upon sin. Sin is the destroyer of happiness, the defiler of character, the despoiler of homes, the death of all real life. Sin deceives men. Sin makes men forget the sacred trusts of life. Sin makes men slaves. All this and more Christ said about sin. The great need of Christianity to-day is to realize anew the heinousness of sin; to see what it does, and how it wrecks and blights and deadens and blackens. It is a veritable body of death—foul, rotting, putrefying—and our freedom from it is our one salvation. The bitter cry of the world is for this freedom. It is the heinousness of sin that gives point and urgency to personal work. If sin does these things for man, how can we rest content without trying to lead men back from sin to God?

*Meditation:* Is there a sin in my heart; and do I know where to find peace? Do I see other men sick from sin, and will I do nothing for them?

## STUDY IV. THE DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY.

"And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." (Luke x. 27.)

"And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." (Luke vi. 31.)

"Thou knowest the commandments, Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor thy father and mother. And he said unto him, Teacher, all these things have I observed from my youth. And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." (Mark x. 19-21.)

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### PART 5. DOES CHRISTIANITY OFFER A FINAL STANDARD FOR MORALS?

THE backbone of the Christian moral standard is the Ten Commandments. There we have a definite command against the worship of idols, profanity, Sabbath desecration, irreverence to parents, murder, adultery, lying, covetousness. As a moral code, perhaps this is the best the world's literature affords. But even this is far from sufficient. It does not cover nearly all the relationships of life; and morality, based on this code alone, would be barren enough. Jesus Christ evidently recognized this fact, so he went beyond the law to lay down the precepts of the gospel. He took morality out of the single realm of action and pushed it back into the realm of motive. He said not only was the man who took life a murderer, but even the man who was angry with his brother and had murderous thoughts against him was guilty of the crime.

But no code or set of rules can cover all cases, even though that code referred to the specific motives of a man's heart. There must be something deeper than this, if the moral standard is not to be outgrown. Most of the failures of religious sects in the moral realm have arisen from an attempt to follow literally a set of rules. But men outgrow rules. They advance, but rules do not advance with them; hence it arises that the moral life of the people may be far higher than the simple rules by which they are supposed to mold their conduct.

Jesus Christ met this situation by transferring morals into the realm of life principles. He said if you are in doubt, then do the thing which you would want your neighbor to do to you. Put yourself in your neighbor's place, and ask what you would then think of your proposed action. If from this outside point you can wholly approve it, then it must be unselfish and worthy. Thus the principle of love becomes the determinant of the quality of action. Whatever is selfish, whatever will hurt another, even though it may apparently serve your own ends, that thing is morally wrong.

In the ethics of Jesus, love is the final standard. No act which cannot pass that standard is accounted worthy or moral. Every act which is incited by the motive of love, although it may fall short of its mark, nevertheless has in it the quality of worthiness because it has a worthy motive behind it.

In this light lovelessness is as evil as passion or appetite, and one can move away from God as rapidly by the one road as by the other. Selfishness is sin, and love is life.

This gives us at once a final and complete standard for morals. The human race being what it is, can never outgrow unselfish love; and by as much as that holy passion grows in the human heart, by just so much will the moral standards of Jesus be advanced.

#### STUDY IV. THE DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY.

"And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." (John xvii. 3.)

"But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry." (Luke xv. 17-24.)

"Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." (Luke xv. 10.)

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#### PART 6. WHAT IS SALVATION?

IN the non-Christian religions the most prominent element in salvation is freedom from the results of sin. Escape from something unpleasant or painful is the heart of their message.

Christian salvation contemplates saving man from the awful results of sin, but it goes much deeper than simple freedom from punishment. Sin brings with it not only a sense of guilt but a state of guilt and uncleanness. Christian salvation through repentance and forgiveness removes both

the sense of guilt and the uncleanness consequent upon sin. (Cf. Study I.)

But Christian salvation is not simply freedom from sin and its guilt, which comes from submitting one's self to the life of a forgiving Christ; it has a positive content in it that brings one back into proper relationship with those for whom we are made.

"A person is lost when he gets away from the person to whom he belongs and is in danger of not getting back. One person may get away from another without being separated from him in space. A child who cares nothing for his father, and would be equally content to go with one of the hundreds of persons passing him and his father on the street, is more hopelessly 'lost' to his father than is the child who, a block away from his father, stands frightened and crying for him."<sup>1</sup>

"If to be lost is to fail to care for God as a Father and for men as brothers, then to be 'found' or to be 'saved,' both of which were favorite words of Jesus, is to be brought to feel a vital, personal interest in God as a Father and in men as brothers. It is to take one's proper place in God's family."<sup>2</sup>

To sum up the teachings of studies one and two, to be saved, in Christian terminology, means that a man has become sick of his sin; has come back to Christ in simple manhood and asked forgiveness; has had his sin forgiven, his sense of estrangement removed; has found a new power for life; and has now taken his place in the family of God as a true son to his Heavenly Father and as a true brother to his fellow-men, and this is *Life*. No other religion has any such fundamental gospel of salvation.

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<sup>1</sup>Bosworth's "Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles," p. 116.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

## STUDY IV. THE DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY.

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. xi. 28-30.)

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is." (1 John iii. 1, 2.)

"Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice." (Phil. iv. 4.)

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## PART 7. DOES THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SATISFY THE HUMAN SOUL?

JESUS CHRIST believed that he could lead men into such an acquaintance with his Heavenly Father that this new fellowship would meet all their spiritual needs. He recognized that the supreme need of the human soul was fellowship with the divine. He therefore made provision for removing the barriers which keep men from such fellowship, and made such a revelation of God as has enabled men ever since to find a new and growing friendship with a Father God.

Has Christianity satisfied men? Is there anything to prove that Christ was not mistaken in his claims?

One of the marvels of history is the spirit of buoyancy and joy which pervades the apostolic writings. Here were men living in the midst of persecution, hardships, privation; and yet every page of the New Testament glows with the



splendid spirit of rejoicing. It was a real rejoicing in tribulation. Now this is no stoicism. It is no hardened endurance of that which cannot be escaped. It is an enthusiastic rejoicing which indicates that these men have something within which fairly lifts them above physical discomfort. It is the victory of a satisfied soul over the inconveniences and suffering of a persecuted body.

I have in my library a beautiful print of Max's "Last Token," the original of which is in the Metropolitan Art Museum, New York. It is the picture of a martyr girl in the den with the wild animals. A monster tiger is just coming out from his bloody lair by her side. The girl is completely oblivious of the animals, and in her face is written that glorious victory of the inner life which made the martyrs great. A religion which can give such a peace as is written in that beautiful face is the religion for the restless souls of men.

Ever since Christ came into the world, men have somehow felt that they could have communion with him and with God; and through that communion they have come to find joy and peace and blessedness. The new gospel of redemption which is being written day by day as men come to know Jesus Christ is a gospel of rejoicing. If one had space one could cite literally hundreds of cases where men have found a life of joy and peace through the gospel of Christ. The testimony of those who are competent witnesses is that Christianity does satisfy, and this is the final test of reality.

I see thee not, I hear thee not,  
 Yet art thou oft with me;  
 And earth has ne'er so dear a spot  
 As where I meet with thee.

Like some bright dream that comes unsought  
 When slumbers o'er me roll,  
 Thine image ever fills my thought  
 And charms my ravished soul.

—Roy Palmer.



STUDY V.

CHRIST'S METHOD OF EXTENDING THE KINGDOM.

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## STUDY V. CHRIST'S METHOD OF EXTENDING THE KINGDOM.

That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John i. 1-3.)

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### PART I. INTRODUCED INTO A VALUE THROUGH TESTIMONY.

MEN enter into the appreciation of values through the testimony of those who have already experienced such values. The sum of the world's truth would be small indeed if every man had to discover for himself through experience each new truth. Through the testimony of experts from a thousand different fields, I enter into the possession of values which I then verify by experience.

If I wish to know the facts about electricity I will go to Mr. Edison. He tells me that he has in his laboratory proved that by using certain chemicals he can produce an electric current. By passing this current over wires properly connected with transmitters and receivers he can talk to me one hundred miles away. I at once accept his testimony and, taking down the receiver, call up my friend one hundred miles distant. I enter into this value through the testimony of another.

The testimony must come from a competent witness. If an African from the Upper Congo told me about the marvels

of electricity I might doubt him, for he has had no way of testing this power. In order to be a competent witness one must have had first-hand experiences with the facts.

Testimony is strengthened when a great many men have dealt with the same facts and bring back similar reports. The oft-repeated experience of a witness brings conviction of reality. However, if you alone in all the world have had an experience, you wonder if you have been deluded. When another man reports the same experience with the same facts, you begin to be confident. When a thousand men give reports that substantiate your own, you become morally certain of your experience. The reality and truth of a testimony must be referred to the judgment of all those who as experimenters in that realm are competent witnesses. When such reality has been well established we at once begin to act on the report of the witnesses. We enter into these values through personal testimony.

*Personal Thought:* Have you any 'religious testimony which you should be passing on to others? Have you been an experimenter in the laboratory of Christian character?

## STUDY V. CHRIST'S METHOD OF EXTENDING THE KINGDOM.

"But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 8.)

"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.)

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### PART 2. CHRIST EXPECTED MEN TO REPORT THEIR EXPERIENCE TO OTHERS.

CHRIST wrote no book in which he set forth his teachings. He built no monuments to commemorate his deeds. He asked no biographer to write his life history. And yet Christ confidently expected that his kingdom should continue to grow until he had universal dominion. This seems a strange, loose method of bringing in a universal kingdom. Yet he had provided an effectual way of spreading this message.

He took twelve men to be with him. He taught them some of his own experience with his Father God. He helped them to catch something of the message of his life, then he sent them out to bear testimony to their experience. He expected each disciple to introduce the men next to him into this greatest of all life values. Then he expected each of these new experimenters to introduce in turn the people whom they touched into this same fundamental value.

Christ expected each Christian man to become a competent witness as to the reality of the God friendship. He expected that the growing number of men who had gone into the laboratory of Christian life and found a new power, a

new peace, a new joy—he expected them to come out and report what they had found. To put it plainly, Christ chose the most fundamental and the most scientific method of spreading his kingdom—personal testimony.

Christ himself used this fundamental method. In the midst of his busy life, he was never too hurried to sit down with a single soul and share with it his sense of God. Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, Zaccheus, the blind man, and many others went out from Christ's presence with a new sense of God because of Christ's simple personal testimony.

*Personal Thought:* Have you ever taken the trouble to share with your nearest friend the experience you have had with God?

## STUDY V. CHRIST'S METHOD OF EXTENDING THE KINGDOM.

"But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert. And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship; and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of scripture which he was reading was this:

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;  
And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb,  
So he openeth not his mouth.  
In his humiliation his judgment was taken away:  
His generation who shall declare?  
For his life is taken from the earth.

And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other? And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus." (Acts viii. 26-35.)

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### PART 3. TESTIMONY THE METHOD OF EARLY CHURCHES.

HERE is the simple story of a man who had learned in the laboratory of Christ the meaning of the God friendship. He meets a man who needs an interpreter. He at once gets into the chariot and, through his own experience leads the eunuch into an appreciation of the value of Christ. It is a case of simple personal testimony.



Rev. Mr. Lamb in his little volume, "Won by One," points out the fact that in the brief narrative of Christ's healing ministry twenty of the persons healed were brought to him by some individual—that is, through some personal worker. He also points out that perhaps none of these persons would ever have come to Christ had they not been brought by some other person.

The whole method of the early Church seems to have been one of personal testimony. One can imagine that St. Paul, in the Roman prison or confined in his own house, preached Christ to many a soldier. He bore simple testimony to the power that had come into his own life through contact with Jesus.

This method of work was followed in the medieval Church. It is reported of the Waldensians: "He who has been a disciple for seven days looks out some one whom he may teach in turn, so that there is a continual increase."

This is the method of Christian work most in favor in the foreign field to-day. Mr. Mott in his latest book, "The Decisive Hour of Christian Missions," says: "It is probable that a larger proportion of Korean Christians have won others to Christ than of those of the Church of any other land." (P. 77.) Speaking of the same type of work in the Presbyterian Mission in Honan, China, he says: "So fully have they accepted the practice of leading others to Christ as a necessary work of genuineness on the part of the convert that, as a mission, they have decided not to baptize any person unless he has led some one to Christ." (P. 179.)

*Personal Thought:* If this test were applied to me, what would be my Christian standing?

## STUDY V. CHRIST'S METHOD OF EXTENDING THE KINGDOM.

"Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. And seeing the man that was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it." (Acts iv. 13, 14.)

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### PART 4. TESTIMONY THROUGH THE LIFE.

THE final thing about testimony is the character of the witness. Is he one who has had experience with the facts and can he be trusted to report truly his experience? In the case of Christian testimony, character is of the essence of the experience of the witness; therefore any lack of character disqualifies us as reliable witnesses. No man's testimony concerning the truth of Christ's gospel is valid unless his character prove the facts of his report.

Herein, however, lies the greatest power of the Christian witness. His report is not simply his words, but his life is the living testimony. W. W. Crutchfield was the first student Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association at the University of Texas. When I visited that institution during his labors there one man, reported to be an atheist, came to see me about his life. He frankly told me he had claimed to be an atheist, but he said: "I am not one now since Crutchfield came here, for he has a life that no ordinary power can explain."

At Furman University one day the captain of the baseball team and all his men came to my meeting wearing their suits, being on the way out to practice. The captain was a fine athlete and an influential student, but not a Christian; in fact,

quite profane. I asked the president of the Young Men's Christian Association to bring him for an interview. The president at first refused, saying he had no influence. But I insisted, and he brought him after the evening meeting. When the captain and I were alone I said I was glad he had come, for he had influence in college and he ought to be a Christian so that his influence would be in the right direction. His first word was: "There is certainly something in Christianity, and if I could be as good a man as the man who brought me to see you I would become a Christian at once." A man's character is of the very essence of his testimony.

We do not need to be perfect, but we need to have that in us which indicates we are moving Godward, if we expect to bear successful testimony.

The best revelation of truth is the life, hence Christ said: "Ye are the light of the world;" and Paul said: "Ye are my epistles known and read of all men."

May every soul that touches mine,  
Be it the slightest contact, get therefrom some good,  
Some little grace, one kindly thought,  
One aspiration yet unfelt, one bit of courage for the darkening sky,  
One gleam of faith to brave the thickening ills of life,  
One glimpse of brighter skies beyond the gathering mists,  
To make this life worth while, and heaven a surer heritage.

—*Bosworth's "Life of Christ."*

STUDY V. CHRIST'S METHOD OF EXTENDING  
THE KINGDOM.

"So thou, son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die, and thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way; that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it, and he turn not from his way; he shall die in his iniquity, but thou has delivered thy soul. And thou, son of man, say unto the house of Israel: Thus ye speak, saying, Our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we pine away in them; how then can we live? Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? (Ezek. xxxiii. 7-II.)

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## PART 5. IS PERSONAL TESTIMONY NECESSARY?

THERE is no greater crime committed by men than to have truth in their possession and refuse to pass it on. We are custodians of the blessings of life. Even as low a form of power as money cannot any longer be used entirely selfishly. The world demands that its men of great wealth shall use such wealth in a friendly spirit. Much more is this true of intellectual achievement. A physician who knew a complete remedy for tuberculosis but refused to pass it on would be branded as the enemy of society. Few of us realize that the world needs a message of God more than it needs money or intellectual truth. It is an awful thing for a man to be the sepulcher of a real spiritual message.

Many men will never really hear the Christian message unless given by us personally. Thousands never go to

church. Many of those who do go have their minds somewhere else during the service. They never read the Bible, they rarely read any religious books or papers. Their minds are simply never arrested by the thought of God. There is only one way of getting the attention of such persons, and that is through personal work. If you sit down by their side you can get their attention, and perhaps they can be won.

There is still another reason for doing personal work. Some men need counsel and encouragement which they cannot get in public service. They must have the chance to tell out their heart needs. They will never be won otherwise. After a meeting in one of the State institutions in the South I met a man out on the steps of the building where the meeting had been held. It was dark, and I could not see what kind of a man he was. He said he had heard me speak, and I ventured to ask him if he was a Christian. He replied in the negative. I asked him if he would not go back to the room with me to talk it through. He gladly accepted, saying that was the thing he was hoping I would ask him to do. I found him discouraged and defeated. He told me a story which could never have come out in a public meeting, and without the knowledge of which I could never have helped him. After a half hour we bowed together in prayer and he gave his heart to Jesus Christ. Many men will never be won unless some one meet them sympathetically and help them find Christ.

Let me live in a house by the side of the road,  
Where the race of men go by—  
The men who are good and the men who are bad,  
As good and as bad as I.  
I would not sit in the scorner's seat  
Nor hurl the cynic's ban;  
Let me live in the house by the side of the road  
And be a friend to man.

*Foss's "The House by the Side of the Road."*

## STUDY V. CHRIST'S METHOD OF EXTENDING THE KINGDOM.

"He answered, The man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to Siloam, and wash: so I went away and washed, and I received sight. . . . They say therefore unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, in that he opened thine eyes? And he said, He is a prophet. . . . He therefore answered, Whether he is a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. . . . The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he opened mine eyes. We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshiper of God, and do his will, him he heareth. Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." (John ix. 11, 17, 25, 30-33.)

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### PART 6. THE NATURE OF OUR TESTIMONY.

OUR report must never have the air of superiority about it. Personal character is not a thing about which one dare freely boast. To bear personal testimony does not mean that the worker assumes to be perfect. It does, however, mean that something has come into our lives which we did not have before, and that something has made a difference. Our report will be simply a statement of our experience and what we have found coming into our life because of that experience.

First we will say, perhaps, that we felt we were wrong, we were dissatisfied and unhappy; but now we feel that the wrong has been forgiven and we are happy. Secondly, we will say, perhaps, that before we found ourselves unable to win victory, but that now we find it increasingly easier to overcome; not that we have attained, but that we are attaining. Then we will say that new values have come to us.

Honesty and truthfulness and the common virtues have new meaning. Then we will say we are growing more sympathetic with men. Somehow the fellowship we have with Christ has made life different. Formerly we did not care much for men, but now we increasingly love men and want to help them. Lastly, we can say we are beginning to find new joy in fellowship with Christ. When we put ourselves in his presence we find peace and satisfaction. All this has come because we so related ourselves to the forces of the spiritual kingdom that we are able to find its truth—that is, we took Jesus Christ at his word; we surrendered ourselves to him, and this has been the result. Like chemists in the laboratory, we have taken the theory that Christ was real, we have acted on it, and the results have proved him to be what he claims.

This is the simple, straightforward report of an experience with Christ. We may not be able to say all of these things. We may be new Christians, and only part of this testimony consciously true with us; we will therefore report as a scientist reports, that we have found some facts and are continuing our work in the Christian laboratory. We expect our fund of experience to grow.

Needs must there be one way, our chief,  
Best way of worship: let me strive  
To find it, and when found, contrive  
My fellows also take their share.  
This constitutes my earthly care:  
God's is above it and distinct.  
For I, a man, with men am linked,  
And not a brute with brutes; no good  
That I experience must remain  
Unshared. —*Browning's "Christmas Eve."*

## STUDY V. CHRIST'S METHOD OF EXTENDING THE KINGDOM.

"Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. v. 13-16.)

"One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ). He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter)." (John i. 40-42.)

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### PART 7. IS PERSONAL TESTIMONY EFFECTIVE?

MANY men would gladly give their personal testimony but for the fact that they feel it is useless. They consider themselves amateurs, immature experimenters in the spiritual realm, and they doubt the effectiveness of their report. Such men should remember that it is not the extent of their experience but the reality of such experience that counts. If I wish to interest you in chemistry, I do not attempt to lay before you at one time the whole achievements of that wonderful science. I choose out one fact, such as the combination of oxygen and hydrogen to form water. I make clear to you the process and the practical uses to which these processes may be put. That convinces you that chemistry is worth the while, and you begin experimenting in chemistry yourself. Similarly, to introduce a man to one fundamental reality of Christian life will set him working in this realm for himself. If I can show by experience how Christ has given me a sense of forgiveness, I may not need to do more.

This is precisely what any genuine testimony is apt to do. Men are all too ready for a message of reality, and if you state plainly your experience they are readily influenced. In one of our colleges recently a man whose brother is a col-



lege man and now on the mission field, came up and asked me if I knew his brother. I replied affirmatively, and a few words were passed. There were a number around, so I asked him to wait a moment. When I was a little free I said to this student that I hoped he was a Christian. "No, he was not; but he knew he ought to be." I spent five minutes with him, and then asked him to keep this in mind as he worked in the shops that afternoon. That night, when I called for those who had decided to be Christians, he was one of the first to stand. All he needed was a simple word of testimony.

In a Western State university there was a fine fellow who, a professor told me, was considered the greatest athlete in the State. He was clean and manly, but not a Christian. I asked the secretary to bring him to me for an interview. He came, and I presented in brief outline what it would mean for him to be a Christian. I tried to make clear the reasonableness of Christian life. In twenty minutes he gave me his hand and said: "I will give my life to Jesus Christ, will join the Church, and go to work." He just needed a word of personal testimony. He had been hearing sermons and addresses for years, but Christianity had never been presented to him personally.

At the University of Illinois another splendid athlete came for conference. He was in doubt about the reality of Christian experience. A simple report of what I and thousands of other men had found to be real, put in terms which he could understand, and he immediately said: "I will try." An hour later in a decision meeting he was the first man to rise to declare his decision to be a follower of Christ.

Is personal testimony effective? H. Clay Trumbull in his "Individual Work for Individuals" claims that he knows of more people won to Christ through his personal testimony than through all his public ministry. And yet he was a great public speaker with exceptionally large opportunities. Rev. John Timothy Stone, pastor of the Brown Memorial Church, in Baltimore, now pastor of the Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago, a man who has had exceptional opportunity for the public preaching of the gospel, bears similar testimony in his volume, "Recruiting Men for Christ." Personal testimony has always been effective, but perhaps never so much as now, when men are searching for reality as never before.



## STUDY VI.

WHY MEN NEGLECT TO BEAR PERSONAL TESTIMONY.

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## STUDY VI. WHY MEN NEGLECT TO BEAR PERSONAL TESTIMONY.

"But after certain days, Felix came with Drusilla, his wife, who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. And as he reasoned of righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me.' (Acts xxiv. 24, 25.)

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### PART I. WE SHRINK FROM ALL PERSONAL CONVERSATION.

MEN naturally shrink from all personal conversation. The man who asks personal questions may easily become a nuisance. The man who tells you all his business is a bore. We like neither to open our hearts to all men nor to have them open their hearts to us. The sacredness of personality must not be forgotten. Even the closest friendship does not allow us to overstep the bounds of personality. The man who uses his friendship as a key to unlock the secret chambers of your heart against your will is not a real friend, for he destroys the sanctity of your private life. These facts, which are very real, make many men hesitate to talk personally about Christ. This is not peculiar to Christian testimony. We hesitate to talk to a man about his personal affairs or his personal manners; indeed, about anything personal. Many Christian workers hesitate to raise money for Christian causes because such money can be gotten only through personal association.

But there is another side to this question. The very fact that a man's personality is sacred makes it unbearable for me to stand by and see that personality robbed of its high-

est development. If a man's personality were a commonplace thing, no one need take the trouble to become interested in its upbuilding. Men who refuse to bear personal testimony either have nothing to report or else they do not realize how important it is to help the other man develop his soul. It is the very sacredness of personality which calls out our personal report.

Some have tried to convince themselves that no man has a right to try to mold the personal life of another. Let us grant it. What would it mean? It would mean that no minister could ever preach again, for preaching is an attempt to help others see life as the preacher sees it. No man could teach any longer, for the teacher's life is not simply dealing out cold facts. Every fact is enveloped in the atmosphere of the teacher's personality, and of necessity molds the life of the student. No poet could write again, for poetry, real poetry, is the pouring out of the soul of man, and it must of necessity affect life. No artist could ever paint again, for that is just his attempt to interpret the meaning of life. Personal testimony as we use it is just carrying into the most important realm the message of the preacher, the teacher, the poet, the artist.

This testimony need not be impertinent and prying. If I have found a value in a great poem, it is the joy of my life to pass that value on. This is intensely personal; it is the giving to you the blessing of my own soul. If I have enjoyed a great picture, it is perfectly natural that I try to interpret that picture for you. If I have a great friendship, my most natural desire is to introduce my other friends into the delights of this fellowship. This is intensely personal, but it is not intrusion. Personal testimony is the simple sharing of that which we have with another. If done in the spirit of humility and love, it cannot be considered an impertinence.

## STUDY VI. WHY MEN NEGLECT TO BEAR PERSONAL TESTIMONY.

"And Moses said unto Jehovah, O, Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And Jehovah said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I, Jehovah? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak. And he said, O, Lord, send I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." (Ex. iv. 10-13.)

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## PART 2. WE ARE LACKING IN KNOWLEDGE.

ONE of the glorious things about Christianity consists in the fact that its reality is not proved by logic, but by life. Experience is the final word. Hence it arises that many men who have had a genuine experience with Christ are not able to give clear expression to what has happened in their souls. The preceding studies have been written to help such persons to give expression to the reality of which they are aware.

There are other people who are not satisfied with experience; they want to go behind that and find the basis of that experience. Two of the following studies will be given to the problem of reality, or what truth is behind these experiences.

To-day I wish to urge three distinct lines of preparation. First, every Christian should study how others have been used in leading men to Christ. Secure H. Clay Trumbull's "Individual Work for Individuals." You can read it through on a Sabbath afternoon. It will indicate how he dealt with many different persons.

Every Christian should, secondly, study the New Testament anew with this thought in mind. Read a whole Gospel on a Sabbath afternoon to see how Christ and his disciples worked with different types of individuals. A Gospel can be read completely in two hours. We need for our own lives to know more about what Christ taught as the essence of Christianity.

Thirdly, I would like to suggest that you begin the habit of having a few moments for Bible study and prayer each morning before you go to your day's tasks. Keep in your Bible a list of persons for whom you are praying. Some one has said that we have no right to talk to a man about his life until we have prayed for him. You cannot long continue these processes of preparation without beginning to share your message with others.

Men and women lightly excuse themselves from personal work on the basis of insufficient knowledge. I very seriously raise the question to-day whether that is a legitimate excuse which God can or will accept. This matter is so important that no Christian dare be either an idler or a bungler. We are duty bound as Christians to learn to help others. God will accept no plea of ignorance.

For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If knowing God they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and for those who call them friend?  
For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

—Tennyson's *"The Passing of Arthur."*

## STUDY VI. WHY MEN NEGLECT TO BEAR PERSONAL TESTIMONY.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! The voice of thy watchmen! they lift up the voice, together do they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when Jehovah returneth to Zion." (Isa. lii. 7, 8.)

"When Jesus saw him lying, and knew that he had been a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wouldest thou be made whole? The sick man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me." (John v. 6, 7.)

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### PART 3. FEAR THAT MEN WILL RESENT OUR TESTIMONY.

MANY Christians fear to speak to another person about the Christ friendship lest it will be resented. This, however, assumes that we are forcing on others that which is not worth having. You do not fear to give a friend a beautiful Christmas present, sharing with him your blessings of life. But you do hesitate to share with him your experience with Him who made the Christmas and gave to it all its present significance. Instead of fearing to share with others, we should rejoice to do so.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings."

The fact is, that men do not resent this simple testimony. I have talked personally with I suppose thousands of college men in the last ten years. In all these years I have had only two men who resented what I said. One of these was asked to come under false pretenses. He was told I sent for him, and I had not, for I did not know him. He became very angry, and I do not wonder at it. But somehow God blessed the interview, and the second man I met on the



campus the next year was this man. He said he could not get away from the interview, but had become a Christian and joined the Presbyterian Church.

Other men who have made it a practice to talk with men about the meaning of the Christ friendship have borne the same testimony.

My observation proves that men will deeply appreciate your thought of them. A Japanese student at Yale went with his fellow-students up to the Northfield Student Conference. One of our secretaries discovered he was not a Christian and went to him to talk it over. The Japanese student said he had wanted to talk that through with some one, but no student had opened the subject. He said he had even come to Northfield hoping that in the atmosphere of the Conference some of them would talk with him. But no man approached him. "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool." This is the despair of many a hungry soul. They are about us on every hand, waiting for us to help them into that life which we say is blessed. They will not resent it; rather they are waiting and expecting that we shall say a word.

Some years ago, at Vanderbilt University in a Sunday afternoon meeting of the Young Men's Christian Association, Fletcher Brockman, then a student, was the leader. Brockman tells of how during the service one student asked for prayer. After the meeting Brockman went with him out on the pike for a long walk, expecting to talk with him about his Christian life. But Brockman was afraid and kept putting it off until the walk was ended and nothing said. About a month later this man openly confessed Christ and Brockman took his hand and told him how glad he was for the decision. Brockman said the man looked him squarely in the face and said: "Yes, Brock; but you are the man who would have let me go to hell. That Sunday afternoon we walked together I hoped every minute you would offer to help me, but you did not."

*Meditation:* Do you suppose any of your friends ever think it strange that you do not share this supreme interest of your life with them?

## STUDY VI. WHY MEN NEGLECT TO BEAR PERSONAL TESTIMONY.

“And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. And now, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: moreover I have seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?” (Ex. iii. 7-11.)

“And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, Jehovah hath not appeared unto thee.” (Ex. iv. 1.)

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## PART 4. PERSONAL TESTIMONY REVEALS THE WEAKNESS OF THE WITNESS.

No man can give a greater message than he really lives. Emerson said: “What you are thunders so loud in my ears that I cannot hear what you say.” In our last study we called attention to the fact that a man’s life is a part of his testimony. Moses did not want to go back to Egypt because he had left an unsavory record behind. He doubtless feared the people would not follow him because he was a murderer. No man of us can bear his best testimony when unforgiven sin remains in his life.

Personal testimony tests the genuineness of life. Here, face to face with men, all that is weak comes to the surface.

We cannot hide behind the protection of a pulpit or a teacher's desk or an editor's table. We are face to face with life. In that close relationship men can look into our very souls. We cannot hide the weaknesses there. It is this that sometimes makes us shrink from speaking to the other man.

When a man is speaking to a crowd he can use general terms, but when one begins talking to an individual he must be specific. If he has no real experience to relate, he cannot cover up that weakness. Generalities will do for an exhortation, but will never pass for personal testimony.

*Personal Prayer:* "O God, take out of my life the weaknesses and sin which rob me of power for service."

## STUDY VI. WHY MEN NEGLECT TO BEAR PERSONAL TESTIMONY.

"And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me." (Isa. vi. 8.)

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### PART 5. WE WANT TO SERVE IN THE EASIEST WAY.

IN this day of organization it is easy to get into the habit of doing our religious work by proxy. It is so convenient to send a check to the Associated Charities and expect them to see that all the poor are cared for. It is convenient and soothing to drop a quarter into the Salvation Army kettle just to make it boil well for some poor wretch. How very convenient to put five or ten or a hundred dollars into the Christmas purse which will send coal and provisions to children who would not otherwise have any Christmas.

All this is good, but not if it makes us feel satisfied that we have done our part. The supreme need of men and women and little children is not dinners or coal or clothes. They need sympathy and love and fellowship. They need courage and character. You cannot send these through the mail. They can be given only by contagion of personality. The slow, hard, uncomfortable process is to learn to know the heart needs of a few of these. Know them so well that you can meet their hunger of soul. Then you will have to give your very soul with your money.

Not a few religious workers are also trying to do their Christian work in the easiest way. They find it much easier to give a public address or to preach to a crowd than to hunt out men one by one and try to lead them into fellowship with Christ. "It requires," said Bossuet, "more faith and courage to say two words face to face with one single

sinner than from the pulpit to rebuke two or three thousand persons, ready to listen to everything on condition of forgetting all."

What we need is more of the giving of ourselves with our Christian work. It is men and not things, life and not speeches, that people need. This is personal work, and will lead others to Christ. This is costly, but it pays.

Not what we give but what we share,  
For the gift without the giver is bare;  
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three—  
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me.

—Lowell's "*Vision of Sir Launfal*."

## STUDY VI. WHY MEN NEGLECT TO BEAR PERSONAL TESTIMONY.

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." (Rom. iii. 10, 11.)

"For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self?" (Luke ix. 25.)

"And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xxv. 30.)

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### PART 6. WE DO NOT REALIZE THE DESPERATE NEED OF MEN.

JESUS believed that men who were not associated with him were in desperate need. A man might have abundance of worldly goods or learning or social position, but if he did not know Christ he was irretrievably lost. This thought made him weep over the inhabitants of Jerusalem. It was the sense of the sin and need of men that weighed down on his soul as he hung on the cross, until his heart broke with the agony. It seems practically certain, from a scientific standpoint, that Jesus did not die of physical pain alone, but of mental suffering. He saw as none of us see the real condition of men. He looked beneath the veneer of wealth and culture and power into the dark and lonely depths of sin-sick souls.

If we could get away from the conception of life as material prosperity, we would see men as they really are, walking about in all their barrenness and wretchedness and sin. Browning represents Lazarus as having an entirely new perspective of life because he had seen into eternity and caught the real standard of values. Discourse of armies

meant nothing to him. The death of his child seemed not to touch him, but the sin of his child startled him into agony.

Most of us are blind to the real needs of men. We do not know their battles and we pass them lightly by, supposing all within is as calm as a summer sea. But hidden from us is the awful struggle of a sin-sick soul.

“We smile, but O, great Christ, our cries  
To thee from tortured souls arise.”

I only wish I could take each reader with me to any one of the colleges I visit and let him hear the call that comes from some of the strongest men in college—a call for a power by which they may win victory. It would break the heart of any man to know the awful struggle in the lives of these men.

In a Virginia college one man recently told me of his terrible battle with drink. In a Western university another man, within a month of this writing, told me of his desperate struggle with passion. In the past two months I have talked with a number of men in the midst of a battle with doubt. On every hand there are men who are battling with selfishness and losing the battle. If men only realized what a common thing temptation is! If we only saw the forces that are destroying character! If we only saw as Christ saw—that sin means separation from God, and all men who are not Christ's are lost—we would all be personal workers.

*Prayer:* “O God, help me to be sensitive to the suffering and sin of the world. Even though it be painful, keep me keenly conscious of the needs of men. Help me to point men to the Christ who alone can give peace.”

## STUDY VI. WHY MEN NEGLECT TO BEAR PERSONAL TESTIMONY.

"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts. . . . And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me." (Isa. vi. 5, 8.)

"Surely the Lord Jehovah will do nothing, except he reveal his secret unto his servants the prophets. The lion hath roared; who will not fear? The Lord Jehovah hath spoken; who can but prophesy?" (Amos iii. 7, 8.)

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## PART 7. OUR RELATION TO CHRIST IS NOT SUCH AS TO BEGET A SENSE OF MESSAGE.

"HAVE I not seen Jesus our Lord?" These are the triumphant words of the Apostle Paul. They were his defense when attacked, as they were also his inspiration in the midst of difficulty. This was the motive power of his life. His soul fairly glowed when he thought how near Jesus was to him. It was Paul's sense of fellowship with Christ which gave him his sense of message.

Isaiah's sense of message came from a vision of God. He felt he knew God and his righteousness, and at once he heard the call to service.

Amos, that wonderful shepherd prophet, who in the lonely hills of Tekoa had learned to know God, had a sense of message. Cornill has called Amos one of the greatest figures in the history of the human mind. He was simply a shepherd, but he had met God out there as he watched his sheep under the clear Judean sky. Amos could not refuse to speak. God had spoken to him, and he must go up to Israel and try to win back God's people. If ever you see a human being living in sin, if somehow you know that God



yearns to save that being from a ruined life, do not turn away from the thought; it is God's call to you for service.

The personal worker must have a sense of message. He must have gone into the spiritual laboratory as did Paul and Isaiah and Amos, and, having met God, then he must come out to tell the waiting people. The greatest need of our day is for men with an overwhelming sense of message—such a sense of message that they cannot get away from it—men who have experienced a reality so tremendous that they must make their report.

He who has such a sense of message will be a personal worker. If we have met God we will want to lead others to meet him too. If we have not such a sense of God's nearness, then we should put ourselves daily in his presence through Bible study and prayer until we begin to know that he is real.

O could I tell, ye surely would believe it—

O could I only say what I have seen;

How should I tell or how can ye receive it,

How till he bringeth you where I have been?

Therefore, O Lord, I will not fail nor falter;

Nay, but I ask it, nay, but I desire,

Lay on my lips thine embers off the altar,

Seal with the sting, and furnish with the fire.

Quick in a moment, infinite forever,

Send an arousal better than I pray:

Give me a grace upon the faint endeavor,

Souls for my hire and Pentecost to-day.

—Myers's "*St. Paul*."



STUDY VII.

HOW TO AWAKEN THE INDIFFERENT AND SELF-SATISFIED.

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## STUDY VII. HOW TO AWAKEN THE INDIFFERENT AND SELF-SATISFIED.

"A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many: and he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee have me excused." (Luke xiv. 16-18.)

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## PART I. CAUSES OF INDIFFERENCE.

INDIFFERENCE seems to arise from one of three causes. First, a man may assume a forced indifference because he dreads to face the results of his sin. This applies to many. Once at Howard College, Alabama, a student told me the story of a very sinful life. I asked him to go back to his room, lock the door, and there alone face his sin in the presence of God. He said he could not do that. "But," I said, "that cannot hurt you, and it certainly is the fair thing to do." "Yes," he said; "but I dare not be alone with God in the presence of my sins for half an hour." Many are afraid to be alone and face their sins. They assume an indifference because their conscience hurts them when they allow themselves to think seriously.

Then there is an indifference of preoccupation. Business is so pressing that many a man never thinks about religious affairs. It is practically impossible to get his attention for religious thought even on the Sabbath. Or if the person with whom you are dealing be in social life, the engagements are so constant and exacting that religious life has little chance. Or if he be a student, athletics and fraternities and socials and study take every hour of his time. Many men are not intentionally irreligious, but they are preoccupied.

There is a third type of indifference due to undervaluation. Many people, men especially, do not think religion has any real message. They think it is a diversion of the mystical, but as for practical power it has none. Religion has so long been taught with preponderating emotional elements that men with battles to fight and big things to do frequently feel they can well afford to do without it. One can readily see there is a great difference in the three types, and the method of work in dealing with each will be different from that of the other two.

*Personal Thought:* Has your indifference to personal work been due to undervaluation of the power of religion to help the other man?

## STUDY VII. HOW TO AWAKEN THE INDIFFERENT AND SELF-SATISFIED.

"Be noble, and the nobleness that lies in others, sleeping, but never dead, shall rise in majesty to meet thine own."

"The office of a friend is to make us do what we can."

"As in water face answereth to face,  
So the heart of man to man."

(Prov. xxvii. 19.)

## PART 2. THE CONTAGION OF CHARACTER.

CHARACTER is caught and not taught ; it is the precept both of psychology and sociology. We gain character by contact with character. Henry Drummond used to say he became a part of every man he met, and every man he met became a part of him. When Coleridge was asked the secret of his life he simply answered: "I had a friend."

The most powerful influence that can be brought to bear on an indifferent man is the personality of a God-filled soul. Become a friend to your indifferent person. Spend some time with him. Do not fear to let him know the great, deep things in which you are interested. If he really believes in you he will soon begin to believe in your power of life. If you cannot become a friend to the indifferent person, get some other strong person to do so.

The greatest testimony for Christ is the consistent daily life of a Christlike person, followed with an open report of how that life has grown. When the great French skeptic visited the mystic Fenelon he came away saying: "If I stay here much longer I will be a Christian in spite of myself."

I once had a little mannerism from which I tried to get free. But like most habits, it was not easily broken. One day a friend, for whom I had great admiration, called this

to my attention, thinking I was not aware of it. I do not remember ever falling into it again. This is the contagion of character. In the student work of the Young Men's Christian Association many a young secretary has unconsciously adopted the mannerism of John R. Mott, the head of that work. It is the contagion of a strong character.

If you can put your indifferent person into the presence of a living friend of Christ for a little while each day, he cannot long remain indifferent. This is not easy work; it will mean sacrifice and the giving up of other things, but it is worth the price.

## STUDY VII. HOW TO AWAKEN THE INDIFFERENT AND SELF-SATISFIED.

"And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." (Mark ii. 27.)

"Are not five sparrows sold for two pence? and not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not: ye are of more value than many sparrows." (Luke xii. 6, 7.)

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### PART 3. HELP THE INDIFFERENT MAN TO REALIZE THE VALUE OF HIS OWN PERSONALITY.

JESUS exalted personality above all institutions. Even the Sabbath itself must not be set over in opposition to the ultimate good of a man. Man is the final element in creation, and all else must bend to the making of an environment in which he shall find full development. Jesus represents God as intensely interested in every human personality. Although his power upholds the universe, and all creation is dependent upon the working of that efficient will, still God is not indifferent to the least individual. Men have denied the efficacy of prayer on the basis of man's insignificance, but this is a false assumption. Significance, according to Christ, is not measured in physical terms. If it were, an elephant would be much more significant than a man. Real value is measured in terms of likeness to God, and by this standard man stands absolutely supreme.

One of the things to do for an indifferent man is to get him to face the fact of his real value. If once he comes to understand the real meaning of his life and God's interest in it, the sense of gratitude ought to lead him to religious life. It is easy to show a man the heinousness of sin which destroys a personality made in the very image of God and



capable of companionship with the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

The most convincing proof of God's interest in men is the life and death of Jesus Christ. Christ came into the world to show us what kind of a God we have; how that God hates sin and loves men. Christ might easily have escaped death if he had not been so deeply interested in men. But his deep desire to call man back to his real place in the universe, his longing to help man see the degrading results of sin and the uplifting power of Godlike love led him so to oppose the dead tradition and the sins of the times that embittered men rose up and crucified him.

The essential meaning of the life and death of Christ is the showing forth of the fact that God loves men and hates sin. Sin is hateful because it destroys the sacred personality of a man. The one way of getting men to turn away from this destroyer is to show how it affects the heart of God.

Put before your indifferent man the fact that Christ believed his life worth saving. Put before him the fact that the one way of saving that personality is for him to be a friend of Jesus Christ. "He that hath the Son hath the life, but he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life."

## STUDY VII. HOW TO AWAKEN THE INDIFFERENT AND SELF-SATISFIED.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. iv. 8.)

"The art of life consists in paying attention to the right things and neglecting the rest." (Jevons.)

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### PART 4. CHARACTER DETERMINED BY THE THINGS TO WHICH WE GIVE ATTENTION.

Two great forces enter into the making of a life: heredity and environment. The battle between the respective advocates of these forces has been waged long and bitterly. Evidently heredity is a great power in the life of a man, for he must have something to start with. But it cannot be final, else man is no longer man but a piece of clay molded by those forces which precede his birth, over which forces he has absolutely no control.

Neither is man completely without power to discriminate between forces which surround him. Doubtless all persons and all forces which surround us do have an influence on us, but the real environment of a man's life is that on which he centers his attention. Three students go to college together, and room together while in college. One becomes an athlete, another a social fop, and the third a real student. The same forces surround them, but they center their attention on different portions of that environment. Only that to which one gives deliberate attention vitally affects character.

Make it perfectly clear to the indifferent person that one whole realm of his life is absolutely dying because he is giv-

ing no attention to the forces of spiritual life. Make it clear that this is by far the most important side of his life, for it is that which connects him with persons, God and men. Further, make it clear to him that persons are the only permanent and valuable realities in the universe. If he is so busy with things that he cannot cultivate fellowship with persons, sooner or later he will wake up to find himself completely isolated, and all the things which he has gathered will bring him no satisfaction. Even knowledge, the accumulation of facts, is useless unless one has contact with persons. An abstract fact is as useless to a man dissociated from persons as is an electric bulb without an electric current. Life is just the sum of man's contact with various personalities.

The indifferent man is deliberately neglecting to bring into his field of attention the supreme forces (persons) which make character. He who does not cultivate his relationship with God and Jesus Christ cannot possibly build the largest character.

At the University of Missouri a student came to me and said he believed he had committed the unpardonable sin. When questioned as to what it was he was hopelessly confused. When it was pointed out that the complete neglect of one's religious nature until that nature had atrophied was possibly the unpardonable sin, and that life is just the sum of our contact with persons, he immediately said: "That kind of Christianity is worth while." His complete indifference to creeds and formulas was at once set aside when he came to see the importance of associating with persons.

## STUDY VII. HOW TO AWAKEN THE INDIFFERENT AND SELF-SATISFIED.

"And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting." (Rom. i. 28.)

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou has forgotten the law of thy God, I also will forget thy children." (Hos. iv. 6.)

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### PART 5. ASK INDIFFERENT MEN TO FACE THE FACTS.

THE indifference of undervaluation is always due to the lack of knowledge. But lack of knowledge on a fundamental question is a crime. Hosea again and again calls the attention of the people of Israel to the fact that their greatest sin is the lack of knowledge of God. It lies back of all their sin. A man's mind is given to him that he may come to know the fundamental things. The excuse, so flippantly given, that we do not know is perhaps the most ignoble confession of all. Ignorance is no excuse in the eyes of the law. Neither is ignorance an excuse before God. No man has a right to be ignorant of the facts which are the very foundation of character.

What are the facts? First, that every man has in him a sense of need for God. Does a universal fact such as this have any meaning? If so, has any man the right to pass that meaning by without knowing what it is? The second fact is like unto the first; every man has a sense of sin. He feels himself undone. Is there any reality to this feeling? Does it point anywhere? Why should it be put in the human heart if there is no fundamental reason for it? What right

has a man to fail to fathom the meaning of this stubborn fact? The kind of person Jesus Christ was, the kind of message he brought, the kind of work he did—this is a group of facts which challenges the attention of every sane man. Every thinking man must do something with these facts. No man who claims to be intellectually honest can afford to pass over facts like these—in their influence on history the most momentous facts the world has ever known.

Honesty of mind demands two things: First, that a man shall face the facts of life as they are. The man who is too lazy or too indifferent to face the most fundamental facts of life is simply intellectually dishonest. No other word will express it. Secondly, when a man sees a truth he must act on it, if he means to keep his intellectual self-respect. To know truth and not to act on it to the best of one's ability, this is sin. It is moral suicide. It is intellectual dishonesty.

Bring your indifferent man squarely before these facts. Help him to see that indifference is a sin against his intellectual self-respect. Help him to see that dishonesty here is more awful in its consequences than dishonesty in connection with the realm of things.

## STUDY VII. HOW TO AWAKEN THE INDIFFERENT AND SELF-SATISFIED.

"Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, and if in the third, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not have left his house to be broken through. Be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh." (Luke xii. 37-40.)

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### PART 6. MEET THE EXCUSES "NO TIME" AND "DON'T FEEL LIKE IT."

THE man who is indifferent because of preoccupation feels that he has not the time to be a Christian. There are three things which, it seems to me, we ought to say to this man. First, he finds time for all things that he really considers worth while. If he is genuinely in earnest about this time question, then he undervalues Christianity. If it is worth anything, it is well worth the time necessary. Make the heroic call for service.

Secondly, I would say to him that it does not take any more time to be in a friendly attitude toward God and men than it does to be in an unfriendly attitude toward these persons. Christianity is not a matter of time but a matter of spirit.

Thirdly, I would say to him (and I would be willing to stake the whole argument on this) that he gains time by being a Christian. Every person who has any serious work must come to that work in the spirit of calm and composure. He who does not have himself well in hand, who does not hold the reins of his life well in his grip cannot hope to ac-

comply with great things. The busier a man is the more important that he should have a perfect calm and self-control. Whatever will help a man to get this calm and self-control will surely add to his capacity for achievement. Such power we claim for religious life. The proof of this is not far to seek. The men who have carried the weight of the world's burdens in all generations have on the whole been religious men. It has been demonstrated by more than one study that the Christian men in our colleges as a class outstrip the non-Christian men. They ought so to do. They have a sense of calm, of peace, of self-control which makes every hour count for more than it could otherwise do.

Another man objects that he does not feel like being a Christian. But one cannot afford to live on feelings alone. One's judgment must be given some consideration. Besides, all the training, all the education we have had has been an attempt to enable us to feel as we ought to act, and not to act as we feel. Duty and not feeling is the supreme word.

Some men think that right action when one does not feel right is hypocrisy. But it is far better for a man to feel wrong and act right than both to feel and act wrong. Besides, if a man's judgment tells him the right thing and he acts on it, his feelings will soon swing into line.

## STUDY VII. HOW TO AWAKEN THE INDIFFERENT AND SELF-SATISFIED.

"Happy is the man that feareth alway; but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief." (Prov. xxviii. 14.)

"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye." (Acts vii. 51.)

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. x. 12.)

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matt. v. 6.)

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### PART 7. THE SIN OF THE SELF-SATISFIED.

THE man who is satisfied with himself and refuses to receive anything from the outside is, in the nature of the case, cut off from all growth. The very first condition of receiving any truth is to be dissatisfied with your present attainment. It is the hungering and thirsting that make it possible for one to be filled. He that neither hungers nor thirsts must always remain empty.

To such a person one can say that the most serious result of sin is the consequent readjustment of a man's attitude toward it. At first it seemed wrong; but now it seems perfectly legitimate. Self-satisfaction does not mean perfection, but rather that conscience has been stifled. If you find a person of this type, you must make him see that the best part of his life has been killed. A college man at a religious gathering once protested to me that the vilest forms of sin were legitimate and proper. His conscience seemed to be absolutely asleep. Another student excused cheating on the basis that



all students did it, and it was necessary in order to pass. Sin deceives us in that it makes us defend the practices of our lives, which practices at first we knew were wrong.

The self-satisfied man gets behind the plea that he is doing his best and that is all that is necessary. But no man is doing his best who does not take advantage of every means which is provided. Think of the silliness of a boy and girl who would say they were doing their best to get an education, and yet refuse to attend a college in their own town when the means were provided. The man who says he is doing his best and yet refuses to take God into account deliberately falsifies. He is not doing his best until he has called all possible resources to his aid.

Lastly, to the self-satisfied man you can say that the greatest sin against love is neglect, and that sin he is committing because he refuses to speak to his Heavenly Father. He is guilty of the greatest of sins, ingratitude. "To watch," says George Adam Smith, "though unable to soothe a dear body racked with pain is peace beside the awful vigil of watching a soul shrink and blacken with vice and your love unable to redeem it."

He who will deliberately wound the heart of love is guilty of the darkest sin. This is what the self-satisfied man does daily. By refusing to love his Father, by refusing to turn to him in friendly spirit, he is deliberately wounding that Fatherly God. If he has no other sin than this, he needs forgiveness.

"Hell," says George Adam Smith, "has been painted as a place of fires. But when we contemplate that men come to it with the holiest flames in the nature quenched, we shall justly feel it is rather a dreary waste of ash and cinder, . . . silent in death, for there is no life there; and there is no life there because there is no love, and no love because men in rejecting or abusing her have slain their own power ever again to feel her presence."



STUDY VIII.

HOW TO HELP THE MAN WHOSE FAITH IS UNSETTLED.

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## STUDY VIII. HOW TO HELP THE MAN WHOSE FAITH IS UNSETTLED.

"Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" (Job xi. 7.)

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?" (Rom. xi. 34.)

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### PART I. PRESENT-DAY FORM OF UNREST.

THIS is distinctly not an age of scoffing. Men once laughed at religion and thought it the most foolish dream. The French Revolution banished Christianity and put the worship of reason in its place. One skeptic said he could go through the Bible and fell the trees and they would never grow again. It was with pride that one truly great spirit signed himself "Percy Bysshe Shelley, Atheist." No man of thoughtfulness would do that now. The age of blatant infidelity is gone.

Neither is this an age of atheism. Most men acknowledge that there is a God, though they may stop far short of the Christian conception of a God who as a Father loves his children.

The present form of doubt is not so far removed from that of Job. It is a reverent uncertainty. Men are not sure as they once were. The whole basis of knowledge has been changed. Science has brought us to feel that we must proceed carefully from the known to the unknown. Criticism has made us careful in the examination of the records of the past. Philosophy has made us less dogmatic about some supposedly religious facts. Some men are therefore deeply troubled.

The point of this day's thought is simply this: Unsettled

faith is nothing new. It has always existed. But present-day uncertainty is not irreverent or atheistic. The person who claims to be an atheist is perhaps unlearned. Most of the men in doubt are honestly seeking light. They believe there is a power in the universe which works for righteousness, but they are not certain of its attributes.

The first step in meeting and helping the person whose faith is unsettled is to recognize the form which his questioning assumes. The studies which follow will attempt to make clear some of the fundamental questions of Christian life. They are put plainly and simply, in order that they may help even the unscholarly and immature. A sympathetic understanding of these forms of uncertainty may help us to reach a solution of some of them. Tennyson strikes the keynote to the present type of doubt in those pathetic lines of "In Memoriam:"

The wish that of the living whole  
No life may fail beyond the grave,  
Derives it not from what we have  
The likest God within the soul?

I falter where I firmly trod,  
And falling with my weight of cares  
Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
That slope through darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith and grope  
And gather dust and chaff, and call  
To what I feel is Lord of all,  
And faintly trust the larger hope.

## STUDY VIII. HOW TO HELP THE MAN WHOSE FAITH IS UNSETTLED.

"And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do questionings arise in your heart? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish. And he took it and ate before them. And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures." (Luke xxiv. 38-45.)

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### PART 2. OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE MAN OF UNSETTLED FAITH.

THERE is nothing in the life of Christ which is more beautiful than the attitude he assumed toward his doubting and troubled followers. A man with an unsettled faith is like smoking flax, which smolders but cannot burst into flame. Christ never rudely smothered out the spark that was there. Instead, his kindly spirit fanned it into flame.

How different from this is the attitude assumed by many of Christ's followers of to-day. I have on my table, as I write, a book on personal work in which the chapter on doubt is headed with the quotation: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt," etc. The author goes on to say that most of the doubt is due to corrupt living. This is absolutely false. Some men do claim to be in doubt because they wish to excuse their sin, but that is not the prevailing temper of our time. Most doubters to-day are really troubled and are honest. If we are to reach them and help them, we must recognize their honesty.

Neither is it a sign of weakness that a man should be un-

settled. The doubter is often referred to as an intellectual trifler or as an intellectual imbecile. Such there may be—God pity them!—but it is certain that the majority of the men who are unsettled belong to neither class.

Our attitude must be one of trust. We must give them credit for being honest and sincere, as most of them are. We must treat them as intellectual equals, as indeed they are; and not infrequently they are superiors. A senior at the University of North Carolina asked me to have a talk with a freshman who was in doubt. I asked the senior if he had ever talked with his friend, and he said: "Yes; but he has read so much more widely than I that I cannot help him." I have found unsettled students in agricultural schools who have read and studied more on the fundamental questions than have Christian postgraduates in the average university. Intellectually they are as a class really worthy.

Neither are we to treat these men as enemies of truth. They may be the greatest friends of truth. Luther was in his day a great heretic; Wesley was considered a dangerous man; and indeed Jesus Christ himself was branded by his time as the arch enemy of truth.

Read to-day all the passages you can find where Christ deals with a man in doubt. See if Christ was not sympathetic. Shall we not follow in his footsteps?

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
Sweet-hearted you, whose light-blue eyes  
Are tender over drowning flies—  
You tell me doubt is devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew  
In many a subtle question versed,  
Who touched a jarring lyre at first,  
But ever strove to make it true.

Perplexed in faith but pure in deed,  
At last he beat his music out.  
There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gathered strength,  
He would not make his judgment blind;  
He faced the specters of the mind  
And laid them. —Tennyson's "*In Memoriam*."

## STUDY VIII. HOW TO HELP THE MAN WHOSE FAITH IS UNSETTLED.

"And one of the multitude answered him, Teacher, I brought unto thee my son, who hath a dumb spirit. . . . And he asked his father, How long time is it since this hath come unto him? And he said, From a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him both into the fire and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. And Jesus said unto him, If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth. Straightway, the father of the child cried out, and said, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." (Mark ix. 17, 21-24.)

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### PART 3. HOW MUCH MUST ONE BELIEVE BEFORE HE CAN BEGIN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

INCORRECT belief or no belief at all is not a matter of unconcern. It does make a difference what we believe or fail to believe. Right belief has a contribution to make to the life, and without that right belief the largest character can never be ours. The danger of pressing this too far lies in the fact that we may drive many people into negative life. If a man cannot accept all the creeds, then he feels himself excused from taking up the obligations of the Christian life. The attempt to make men settle all doctrinal questions before they become Christians has kept many a person out of the kingdom.

What is the very minimum amount of belief that one may have and still start to be a Christian? Does one have to believe there is a personal God? Does one have to believe that Christ is the Son of God? Must one believe that the Bible is inspired? Can he begin without having settled these three fundamental questions? Christ said he could. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teachings." The minimum of conviction is that the Christ ideal is worthy, that it offers a standard higher than what we have



elsewhere, and that we must give ourselves to the kind of life that Christ offers. This is very little, and yet it is wonderfully large and comprehensive. Christ was willing to trust it, for he knew that the man who gave himself up to the ideal would some time come to accept the living reality.

As if to press this point home, Christ again and again appealed to men to accept his works as having the God quality in them: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not in me, believe the works." (John x. 37.) And again he says: "The very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." (John iii. 36.)

To the man therefore who does not and cannot now accept the fact of a personal God as verified truth; cannot accept the fact of Christ as a reality to which his mind can give assent; cannot even accept the record in the Bible as authoritative, but does believe the ideal of Christ as we now have it, regardless of where it comes from—to such a man the beginning is possible. He is very far from being a mature Christian, but he can begin.

The one essential thing for a beginning is that high morality makes an appeal to him. If there is that in the man which responds to the fundamental reality of character which Jesus displays, and if he will deliberately put himself into the right relation with that ideal, then he has already begun to be a follower of Christ. Of course he must not stop with this. If he is satisfied with this little, that is proof positive that he has not the honest attitude. But if he begins here and tries to make this ideal the pattern of his life, with mind ever open and alert to new truth, he has entered the path which leads to life eternal.

Robert Browning, for whom the reality of Christ had many difficulties, threw himself into the Christ ideal, and finally he was able to write these splendid lines:

That one face, far from vanish, rather grows  
Or decomposes but to recompose,  
Becomes my universe that feels and knows.

"That face," said he to Mrs. Orr, "is the face of Christ. That is how I know and feel him."

## STUDY VIII. HOW TO HELP THE MAN WHOSE FAITH IS UNSETTLED.

"If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself." (John vii. 17.)

"But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons. . . . Therefore I say unto you, Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come." (Matt. xii. 24, 31, 32.)

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### PART 4. THE ATTITUDE OF THE TRUTH SEEKER.

IN the last section we indicated the minimum belief which a man may have and yet start toward Christ. But to stop with that little would be spiritual suicide. If one finds an ideal really worthy, it is incumbent on one to go behind the ideal to its originator. To ascribe this ideal to chance is the worst blasphemy. Every fair-minded man must be open to conviction.

Jesus Christ healed a blind, dumb lunatic. It was a striking and marvelous work. The Pharisees had to find some explanation for it. Human nature must find an explanation for facts. We cannot rest satisfied otherwise. So the Pharisees said: "This is not the power of God, but the power of Satan." Christ turned and sharply rebuked them: "Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven." "They had witnessed that glorious miracle," says David Smith, "and they had known it was a work of God; yet they had hardened their hearts and pronounced it a work of the devil." This was a sin which could not be pardoned, for it was a sin against the very Spirit of Truth.

The man who deliberately closes his eyes to truth, by that

very act destroys his capacity to find truth. Fidelity to a man's truth-seeking instinct, loyalty to one's own best inner light is the absolute essential of life. The minute one ceases to search for truth or refuses to obey truth when found he is beginning to commit that sin which destroys all future possibilities.

Your man, therefore, who begins with the acceptance of an ideal *must be honest enough to search for the explanation of that ideal*. The worship of an ideal is not religion, and will not bring life. In no realm of life save religion will a man sit down satisfied with a half truth, and one does it in religion at the peril of his life.

Two things the man who starts to find truth must do. First, he must act on all the light he now has. Every fragment of truth which he possesses he must *practice* and *propagate*. He dare not wait until all mystery is solved. He must act on what he now has. "He that hath to him shall be given." Action on the little we have opens the way for new truth. "Any flash of insight into the good," says Professor Coe, "however dim and incomplete, at once lays obligation upon us."

In the second place, each man must be a searcher for truth. The man who says he does not believe water will quench thirst and dies of thirst with water at his hand is a pure trifler. *He who says that the Christ ideal is beautiful, and yet makes no attempt to investigate thoroughly the facts behind that ideal, is a thousand times more a trifler*. It is not a sin to be in doubt, but it is sin of the deepest dye to sit down satisfied with doubt. Doubt is stagnation and death if one becomes satisfied with it. *The doubter who claims to be honest and yet makes no attempt to dissolve his doubt thereby proves himself the veriest knave*. He may not ultimately come to see truth as you or I see it, but he must get out of his negative mood. He must come to some positive conviction. Anything less than this is trifling.

"We have but faith: we cannot know;  
For knowledge is of things we see;  
And yet we trust it comes from thee,  
A beam in darkness: *let it grow.*"

## STUDY VIII. HOW TO HELP THE MAN WHOSE FAITH IS UNSETTLED.

"And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said, Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, To an Unknown God. What, therefore, ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you." (Acts xvii. 22, 23.)

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### PART 5. BE CONSTRUCTIVE IN DEALING WITH UNSETTLED FAITH.

ARGUMENTATION is the poorest method known for convincing either yourself or another man. In the midst of an argument the passions are aroused and the judgment is thrown into the background. It is always wise when you wish to get another to see the truth, whether it be scientific, political, or religious truth, to allow the other man to state uninterruptedly his conceptions; then state your own in like manner. In dealing with the truth seeker I have usually said: "I myself have had questions, and this is the way I found relief; perhaps this may help you to find the truth which you are seeking." This at once disarms any antagonism. In one of the colleges some years ago I met a relative of Robert Ingersoll, a fine, intellectual fellow. He came for an interview, primed for a great argument. I would not argue. I simply said I took for granted that he was genuinely in earnest to find the truth about Christ. I outlined carefully the steps I had taken in solving my own doubt on that question, and then asked him if he would not begin a thorough investigation. He agreed he would. A year later I visited his college again and he came for another interview. When asked what progress he had made he re-

plied: "I have deliberately come to the conclusion that Christ is the Son of God." Argument would have driven him farther away. Constructive dealing helped.

In this connection one ought to caution the inexperienced worker not to allow himself to be kept on the defensive. Do not let the other man keep you answering his doubts. You cannot answer them all. Some things can be answered only by life processes, not in words. Many a man needs to hang up most of his doubts and live positively on what he does believe.

Therefore do as Paul did. Find out what a man does believe. It may be that the only thing he believes is the reality of his own sense of duty. Then begin with that. Ask him to think of the meaning of this sense of duty, which is universal. Ask him to consider why man alone understands the "ought" conception. From this lead him step by step into constructive thinking.

I once organized a large Bible class of Jewish students. When I proposed that they study the life of Christ one man objected strenuously. I did not ask him his objection, but asked what was the orthodox Jewish conception of Jesus. He said they believe him to be a great teacher and a great prophet. I asked him if they consider him as great a teacher and prophet as Isaiah. "Yes, much greater, the greatest of all." "Well, then, you ought to know what the great man taught and did." Not another objection was raised, and the class studied the life of Christ. But the class could have been wrecked if I had taken the defensive and tried to answer his objections.

Find out what your man does accept. Ask him to forget his doubts for a season, just for the sake of investigation; point out a constructive course of thought; make sure that he actually does think; and, above all, insist on his living up to the standard of what he does believe, and most doubters will soon find the light breaking.

## STUDY VIII. HOW TO HELP THE MAN WHOSE FAITH IS UNSETTLED.

“For when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them.” (Rom. ii. 14, 15.)

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### PART 6. IS RELIGION A REALITY?

I RECENTLY spent an hour with a brilliant young professor talking about the fundamental facts of religion. Finally he said: “I have deliberately come to the conclusion that there is no reality in religion. It is just the exaggerated wish of our hearts, to which we have ascribed reality.” This is not an isolated case. I had a conversation two years ago with another man who took precisely the same attitude. This latter man I know well personally, and consider him one of the cleanest, truest men I know. He is absolutely honest in his belief, or non-belief, as we may call it.

This is no new philosophy. A school of English thinkers held to this theory less than a century ago. To them the one final reality was thought. Everything outside of us is a delusion of the senses. There is no God: and evil is simply that which causes us pain; while good is that which gives us pleasure. Living in the midst of pain as man does, he naturally desires to find peace and soothing. He thinks he can find this in fellowship with a complete being. So man’s desire becomes the father of his God. This meeting of need and creed Browning sets forth in “Easter Day:”

The human hearts’ best; you prefer  
Making that prove the minister

To truth; you probe its wants and needs,  
And hopes and fears, then try what creeds  
Meet these most aptly—resolute  
That faith plucks such substantial fruit  
Wherever these two correspond.

And again in "A Death in the Desert," speaking of the Christ conception, Browning represents the doubter saying:

Did not we ourselves make him?  
Our mind receives but what it holds, no more.  
First of the love, then; we acknowledge Christ—  
A proof we comprehend his love, a proof  
We had such love already in ourselves,  
Knew first what else we should not recognize.  
'Tis mere projection from man's inmost mind.

This whole question of whether there is anything outside us corresponding to our need for God, whether these states which we call religious experience are real or simply the pictures of an inflamed imagination, needs to have careful attention. To-day let us glance back at the headings of Study II. and ask ourselves if a mere imagination can give us peace of conscience, can transform us from self-centered to God-centered personalities, can give us a unified being and send us out with a new loyalty which is helping us to conquer the world. Can a mere "projection from a man's mind" do this?

## STUDY VIII. HOW TO HELP THE MAN WHOSE FAITH IS UNSETTLED.

As the hart panteth after the water brooks,  
 So panteth my soul after thee, O God.  
 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:  
 When shall I come and appear before God?  
 My tears have been my food day and night,  
 While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?  
 These things I remember, and pour out my soul within me,  
 How I went with the throng, and led them to the house of God,  
 With the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping holyday.  
 Why art thou cast down, O my soul?  
 And why art thou disquieted within me?  
 Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him  
 For the help of his countenance." (Ps. lxii. 1-5.)

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### PART 7. IS RELIGION A REALITY?

(Concluded.)

Look back to Study V., Part 1, to see what was given there as a test of reality. Ordinarily men accept an experience as real when a great number of independent, competent witnesses testify to its truth. That the vast majority of the men in the world have testified to their sense of the reality of religion cannot be doubted.

A second test of reality is whether it really makes any difference if the thing in question is neglected. If a thing has reality, then to neglect it must make some difference. Does it make any difference when religion is neglected, and does it make any difference when religion is cultivated? We have tried to answer the second question in relation to a specific religion in Study II. We saw there that something does really happen when a man becomes a Christian.

But is a man poorer when he leaves religion out of his life? Development into the fullest personality is the conscious need of all humanity. The ideal for that development may vary greatly, but all men want and expect development. It is just as universally recognized that man has lost his way. Something is wrong. He has not the power within



him to attain his full development. It is a fact of universal consciousness that fullest development can come only through the proper adjustment of the forces within with the forces without. Now religion is just this readjustment; it is just this proper relationship of the self within with the life without. And precisely this is the most real need and the deepest consciousness of humanity. Millions of men testify that by this proper relationship they have found new power for development. To them religion is real.

The only way, therefore, to set aside the reality of religion is to deny the power of our own inner life to give us the truth. If there is no reality corresponding to this need, and likewise to this consciousness of experience, then there is no such thing as finding truth. If there is nothing to correspond to the fundamental human need, then this is a cheat world. There is no honesty here. It is precisely as if I had eyes but there were no light; or as if I had hunger and there were no food. If we cannot trust our nature, when tested by the experience of universal nature to give us the truth, the truth cannot be found. This ends in nothingness. There not only cannot be any religious truth; there can be no truth of any kind. This makes us of all creation the most miserable part. We have within us a yearning for truth, but we have no way of finding it, or verifying it when found. No sane man can rest in such a conclusion. And yet to avoid that we must trust our natures to give us the truth. If we do that, these natures tell us religion is real. We must therefore accept religion as a reality, or else deny the possibility of finding truth. I see no way out of this conclusion.

And when man questioned, "What if there be love,"

He reasons, "Since such love is everywhere,  
And since ourselves can love and would be loved,  
We ourselves make the love, and Christ was not,"  
How shall ye help this man who knows himself,  
That he must love and would be loved again.  
Yet, owning his own love that proveth Christ,  
Rejecteth Christ through very need of him?

I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ  
Accepted by thy reason solves for thee  
All questions in the earth and out of it  
And has so far advanced thee to be wise.

—Browning's *"A Death in the Desert."*



STUDY IX.

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

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## STUDY IX. FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place  
In all generations.  
Before the mountains were brought forth,  
Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,  
Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”  
(Ps. xc. 1, 2.)

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PART I. IS BELIEF IN AN INTELLIGENT FIRST CAUSE  
[GOD] CONSISTENT WITH SCIENTIFIC TRUTH?

IF we were successful in our last study in making clear that religion is a genuine reality, the next question we will wish to ask is, What is the heart and center of this religion? What is this environment outside us with which we need to relate ourselves? Is it force or is it person. In the University of North Carolina last year I had a number of the brightest men in college asking just this question. What is this force in the universe which seems to make for righteousness? One of these men was specializing on science, and thought science made it impossible for him to believe in God, so I began with him on his positive beliefs. I said to him: “Science proceeds on the assumption that there is a uniformity in the action of nature. If I drop a stone here it will fall to the ground. If I drop it in China next year it will fall likewise. The laws of nature hold good at all times and at all places. Nature acts in accordance with the principle of uniformity.” This he readily accepted. Then I said uniformity is just another way of saying unity. In other words, science proceeds on the assumption that behind all the forces of nature there is one supreme force which knits all together into one complete and perfect whole. This he again readily admitted.

This was one good step; for while we had not arrived at God, we had agreed there was a unity at the heart of the universe.

Science proceeds, in the second place, I said, on the basis of an intelligible world,—that is, science takes for granted that the truth of the world can be understood. The world is made in such a fashion that my mind can take hold of it. If this were not true, there could be no science. If my mind and the nature of the universe were of absolutely different kind, then there would be no common ground and I should not be able to know anything about the world. But the fact that the world is so constituted that it is intelligible is not the result of mere accident. There is a uniform process, and that uniformity is intelligible, hence nature must be the handiwork of an intelligent cause. If there were no intelligence in nature corresponding to my intelligence, then this process of nature would be completely incomprehensible to me. But since these processes are intelligible, I must conclude that the unifying force behind the forces of the universe is intelligent.

This student went away feeling that it was not only possible to believe in an intelligent first cause, but more, it was necessary if he was to have any genuine basis for his science. Science must proceed on the basis of a God that has at least intelligence and power.

## STUDY IX. FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

"And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, even God." (Mark x. 18.)

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## PART 2. CAN WE BELIEVE IN A GOOD GOD?

ONE of the hardest problems that faced the men of the Old Testament was the reconciling of sin, suffering, and triumphant evil with a good God. This is the very heart of the problem in the book of Job. And yet, as I indicated in Study IV., the Christian religion definitely sets forth such a God. Is there any justification for such a conception, and what shall we say to the man who doubts it?

There came to me once for an interview a college man who had been born into a house of infamy, who bore on his body the marks of his mother's sins, whose life had been one long, hard struggle against this evil inheritance, and whose struggle to get an education was scarcely short of a tragedy. He told me his story and asked if I could help him to see that there was a moral principle at the heart of the universe.

First, one had to go over the ground of the last study, leading up to the thought of an intelligent first cause. Then I attempted to show him that the religious nature of humanity demands a chance to worship. His coming to me was an expression of that same inner need. As we have seen in a former study, there must be reality in this religious sense, else we cannot trust our natures to give us truth at all. This I tried to get him to see. Then I said: "Unless God is good, there can be no real religion; for religion is a sense of fellowship with a higher kindred power, with whom we desire to live on terms of friendship. But unless God is good, there is no higher power. Goodness is the final term, and men having a spark of goodness would be far more Godlike than a God without goodness, or, as Browning puts it:

The loving worm within its clod  
Were diviner than a loveless God  
Amid his worlds, I will dare to say.

There cannot be any such thing as religion if there is not a good God. We are led back at once to our old trouble: unless there is a good God then all our aspirations for fellowship with such a God are false tenders, paying dross instead of gold; we are in a false world, a world in which we dare not trust our highest natures, which cannot be.

"Again, if God is not good," I said to my student, "then man's petty goodness is the final goodness that now exists, and there is no complete or perfect goodness in existence. The universe, in other words, according to the estimate of man's best nature, has had left out of it the supreme principle—goodness. There is a canker at the very heart of things which makes life useless and a failure. Since there is no principle of goodness at the heart of things, then my little effort at goodness is useless, for there is no ultimate standard by which to measure my life, and my striving like as not is in the wrong direction instead of the right. Here again we are forced back upon the conclusion that if God is not good, we are completely undone and are living in a false world where we are not sure we can discriminate between right and wrong. But we all know this is sheer nonsense. We know we can tell the difference. We are all practical philosophers in that we act as though there were at the heart of the universe a principle of goodness—that is, a good God." "It is more difficult to account for life on the supposition that there is no good God than it is to convince one's self of such a God. But how can I come to feel his goodness?"

I urged him, since he saw that it was more reasonable to believe in a good God than not to believe in him, to put himself on the side of intellect and act as though there were such a being—that is, test it in the laboratory of experience. If God is good and loving, then he wants us to speak to him. So I urged my student to pray. He is interested in every man and wants every man to have life. So I urged my student to begin loving and serving his fellow-men. Surely he has spoken to his children and has pointed out the way to a larger life; so I urged my student to begin Bible study. Finally this student with the tragic life said that he would try, and a day or two later he was one of the men who rose publicly and declared his intention of being a friend to God.

## STUDY IX. FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

“Bless Jehovah, O my soul,  
And forget not all his benefits:  
Like as a father pitieth his children,  
So Jehovah pitieth them that fear him.” (Ps. ciii. 2, 13.)

“If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.” (John xiv. 7.)

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### PART 3. HELPING THE MAN TROUBLED ABOUT GOD'S PERSONALITY.

THE writers in the Testaments have absolutely no doubt that God is possessed of full personality. In fact, some of the writers of the Old Testament set forth a God with much of the limitations of human personality, and this meagerness of conception has caused many modern Christians to draw away from the idea of God as a person. Christ had a distinct consciousness of God as his Father. All his prayers to God and his statements about God are expressed in personal language. The question which arises here is whether we as modern thinkers can accept as reasonable this conception of divine personality.

At the University of Illinois there came to me a postgraduate student who had been in his undergraduate days an active worker in the Young Men's Christian Association. But he had begun to question the personality of God, and, feeling that this was central, had fallen away from his former Christian activity. Here was an earnest seeker for the truth, who had once believed in this fact of personality, but whose study had led him afield. What could be said to him that would bring back his old conviction in a new and more vital form?

First, I made clear to him that personality is not physical form; these two must be kept absolutely distinct. Then I said to him: “We cannot make for ourselves a mental picture of even human personality. We can only understand the attributes which go to make that personality. The attributes



are intellect, sensibility (love, etc.), will power. Every man is conscious of having united in himself these three in greater or less degrees of development. The conscious union of intelligence, affection, and will makes personality. Whatever being has this has personality. No others have. This is perfectly clear, and yet we cannot picture personality to ourselves. It is, however, none the less real. This my post-graduate finally acknowledged.

I then went on to say that personality does not mean limitation, as is often thought and as he himself had said. On the contrary, personality is a conscious union of these three attributes; and as these attributes become more and more perfect—that is, limitations are removed—the possessor of them becomes more and more completely personal. This makes it possible for Dr. W. N. Clark to define a perfect person as “the being in whom these essential powers which constitute personality (intelligence, affection, and will) exist in perfect quality and degree, and are perfectly bound together and welded in use in the unity of self-directing consciousness. This is the perfect person.”

This is, as I pointed out to my student friend, perfectly conceivable.

I have a little intelligence. I trust my mind to give me fragments of truth. This mind is continually developing, so that I am much more intelligent now than I was twenty years ago. I can conceive of a mind, therefore, that has no limitations in the realm of truth; a mind that knows all truth intuitively. Likewise I have a love nature which is growing. I can conceive of a person who loves instinctively everything that is worthy of love. In similar manner I have some will power. I *can* do certain things, or I *can* refuse to do them. I am a moral agent with a free will. Now I can conceive of a person in whom this will is unlimited, who always chooses the right and immediately acts upon it. Thus I can conceive of a person who has perfect intelligence, perfect love, perfect will, a complete and unlimited personality. This person I call God.

Man's soul is moved by what, if it in turn  
Must move, is kindred soul.

—Browning's "The Sun."

## STUDY IX. FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

"And he said, Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live. And Jehovah said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon the rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand until I have passed by: and I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back; but my face shall not be seen." (Ex. xxxiii. 20-23.)

"Behold, I go forward, and he is not there;  
And backward, but I cannot perceive him;  
On the left hand, when he doth work, but I cannot  
    behold him;  
He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot  
    see him." (Job xxiii. 8, 9.)

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## PART 4. HELPING THE MAN TROUBLED ABOUT GOD'S PERSONALITY

(Continued).

IN my discussion with the postgraduate at the University of Illinois the question arose: If God is a person, and wants to make himself known to men, why is it so hard for men to come to know him? This difficulty was faced in Job and others of the Old Testament writings, and is likewise found in the New Testament. Vaguely, perhaps, even the writer of Exodus understood that it would be death to human personality to be brought face to face with the overmastering personality of the Almighty.

One of the greatest dangers of a strong and masterful personality is that it shall so graft its will upon those about it that these lesser wills shall be entirely smothered. How frequently has one seen just this thing happen in the case of a boy or girl in a home where there is a parent with strong personality. The parent takes all responsibility, decides all questions in advance, and does not advise with the child but settles questions by command. The result is a hot-

house child, without initiative, without power of decision, without self-reliance—a dwarfed and stunted personality.

If this is true in the case of a human personality pressing down too heavily on another human personality, the result of a complete and perfect divine personality pressing with full power on a human being would be a depersonalized being. If God should press himself upon us, we would of necessity lose all our self-reliance, self-direction, initiative; we would be robbed of the very conditions which make it possible for us to develop our mental attributes.

It is one of the marks of God's concern and care for me that he does thus respect my personality, that he does not force me to choose the right. He does not force me to follow him. He does not even force me to know him. This is most remarkable in the life of Jesus Christ. He would not work miracles with the purpose of forcing men to believe in him. He only worked such miracles where they would help the growth of a struggling faith. This, it seems to me, is the very heart of the temptations of Christ. Should he cast himself down from the tower, or assume rulership of the world, and thereby make such a startling display of his power as literally to force men to believe in him? He deliberately turned away from any such procedure, for by forcing faith he would have destroyed the personal lives for whom he had come into the world.

There are some things which even God cannot do, if he is to remain righteously self-consistent—that is, if he is to remain God. One is, he cannot force another personality, however weak, for to force another is immoral, and God cannot lend himself to immorality.

Who speaks of man, then, must not sever  
 Man's very elements from man,  
 Saying, "But all is God's"—whose plan  
 Was to create man and then leave him  
 Able, his own word saith, to grieve him,  
 But able to glorify him too,  
 As a mere machine could never do,  
 That prayed or praised, all unaware  
 Of its fitness for aught but praise or prayer,  
 Made perfect as a thing of course.

—Browning's "Christmas Eve."

## STUDY IX. FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

“God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son.” (Heb. i. 1, 2.)

“The lion hath roared; who will not fear? The Lord Jehovah hath spoken; who can but prophesy?” (Amos iii. 8.)

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### PART 5. CAN GOD SPEAK TO MEN?

At the University of North Carolina a senior came for an interview. He said he had no trouble to believe in the existence of a personal God, but could not understand how that God could speak to men; in short, he could not believe the Bible was a real revelation to men. He was a good student, a worker in the Young Men's Christian Association, a member of the Church, and evidently honest. But he was greatly troubled, for if God could not speak to men in the past, he cannot speak to us now, and we have no way of knowing his will. What could be said to him?

First of all, it was necessary to show him that we do not refer to oral words when we speak of God talking to man. There are a great many ways of communication besides through written or oral words. In fact, words are, after all, the very weakest of expression. I may protest my love for you, and yet my attitude and my actions may deny my words. I speak with my whole personality, not with my lips alone. Whatever conveys to you the impression of my soul is genuine speech, and often these impressions are too subtle for words

“For words, like nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the soul within.”

Then I went on to show him there was no impossibility in the thought of God's speaking to me. This is becoming more and more clear in an age when we are moving out into the realm of new mental laws. We are getting so we are ready to believe that almost anything is possible in the field of mental communication, and our credulity is well founded. Psychology is making absolutely clear to us that one personality may in a measure communicate with another personality without ever saying an audible word, provided the two are rightly related to each other. This being true, there can be no possible barrier to divide the personal God from the personal man.

It would be strange if I, a limited personality, can speak to you, and yet God, an infinite and perfect personality, cannot speak to you. Not only so, but if God is a person interested in his children, it would be very strange if he did not speak to them. This we should certainly expect of him, for, as Dr. Illingworth has pointed out, "Self-communication is of the essence of personality."

The proof that this is possible is just the fact itself that he has spoken to men. Men in all times have been convinced that communion with God is one of the positive realities of life. They are just as sure of this reality as of any other reality of experience. Since there is no inherent impossibility in the thing itself, we must accept their testimony as true, for they have been experimenters in the realm of spirit. The company is large which bears testimony to a common experience, and they are competent witnesses. This, we saw in a former study, is the test of reality.

## STUDY IX. FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him." (John xiv. 21.)

"And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Gen. i. 27-28.)

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## PART 6. WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS OF RECEIVING GOD'S MESSAGE?

BUT my student friend was not satisfied. If God could speak to men, why did he not speak to all men alike? Why had God not spoken to him, since he wanted to know the truth? It was necessary to make clear to him the conditions on which we can hear this voice. I tried to show him there are certain conditions the fulfillment of which alone will make it possible for me and my friend to understand each other.

In the first place, there must be that kind and degree of affinity which makes mutual self-revelation possible. First, this affinity must be moral. If my companion is pure in soul but I am leprous, there can be no mutual self-revelation, for there is too little affinity. The best that can be done will be to make me see the long distance between us and perhaps start me back toward him. Thus we at once see that the second condition of revelation is penitence, or humility—willingness to see the good in another and to accept it.

Now this mutual revelation will be a growing quantity. As I become more like you, you are able to show me more of your life, which in turn accelerates my growth of sympathy

with you and also enables me to open my heart to you. So day by day as we grow toward each other our trust in each other increases, and consequently we are able the more fully to open our hearts one to the other.

This, then, is the condition of coming to hear the voice of God. First, there must be a desire to be like God in character. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Then there must be that trust which opens its heart to the other. Any man who comes to God with a heart yearning, who in humility attempts to find the reality of God, and who trusts God in increasing fashion, will soon find himself conscious of the impressions which God is making on his soul. If we do not hear God speak it is because we have not so adjusted ourselves to him that he can speak to us.

## STUDY IX. FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

“From a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.” (2 Tim. iii. 15-17.)

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### PART 7. WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

A STUDENT at the University of Iowa came to ask how he could reconcile certain statements in the Old Testament which seemed to him to have a comparatively low moral standard with the statement that the Bible is a revelation from God. This student represents a very large class who are deeply troubled over this question.

First, of course, I asked him to forget that he had ever thought of verbal inspiration. A verbal inspiration would be absolutely useless unless God had made a provision for a perfect preservation of the original documents and the stationary meaning of the original words. This had troubled him in former years, but not then. My judgment is that few who study these pages will find any one troubled about verbal inspiration.

Then I asked him to set aside the idea that the Bible was absolutely infallible. By this I meant that we are not required to believe that no mistake can be found in the Bible. In order to have an infallible Bible we should have to have not only the infallible writers but infallible copyists and, what is very much more, infallible interpreters. There can be no absolute infallibility so long as every man interprets the Bible for himself, for no man is infallible. To meet this difficulty the Catholic Church has set up an infallible interpreter, but most of us think that interpreter intensely fallible. “What we need,” I said to my questioner, “is not an infallible outward standard of truth in formal words, but such a picture of a Loving God and a Divine Saviour that



men shall be able to believe in them and hence become new creatures. It is not necessary that every word in the Bible shall be rightly translated in order to set forth such a person." The main thing I wanted him to see was the God in the book, not the form of the book.

In the third place, I tried to show him that the Bible is a progressive revelation. It grows brighter and better step by step. Christ said he had many things to tell his disciples, but they could not hear them yet. The purpose of God's revelation is to teach men, and you can no more begin teaching men final and ultimate religious truth than you can begin in the kindergarten teaching calculus and astronomy. "In other words," I said to my student friend, "God is as sensible as a kindergarten teacher, and begins with man where he finds him. Hence we cannot expect to find the highest and purest revelation in the Old Testament.

The Bible is, it seems to me, the simple, beautiful record of the search of the hungry soul of man for the soul of God, and on the other side it is the strivings of the eager heart of God in the attempt to make himself known to men. If men have fallen short again and again in the attempt to find God, this does not make any less sacred the search.

Or to put it a little differently, the Bible is the report of the great souls who have been experimenting in the field of God. Men in the Bible have gone to God, have tried to find out who he is and what is his character, and they have simply related to us their experience. Viewed in this way the Bible is the most marvelous book of experience in all the records of the world. In it the Jewish people have shared with us their sense of God, and in it men have reported to us their experiences as they searched for him.

The Bible therefore does not stand or fall by some theory of inspiration; it has within itself its final and complete vindication. It vindicates itself because it has an advancing moral standard which culminates in the final principle of love. It vindicates itself because it increasingly reveals a person which finds its culmination in the complete and perfect person of Jesus. It vindicates itself in that it sets forth the reports of men who, having accepted these standards of morals, have found power to live in them through this perfect personality with whom they found themselves drawn into an ever closer fellowship. The Bible is the one unique book, because in it we live with men who have found God.



STUDY X.

HELPING MEN SOLVE DIFFICULTIES ABOUT CHRIST.

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## STUDY X. HELPING MEN SOLVE DIFFICULTIES ABOUT CHRIST.

"Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me?" (John viii. 46.)

"But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats." (Matt. xxv. 31, 32.)

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### PART I. CHRIST THE PERFECT MAN.

IN an earlier study I have referred to a relative of Robert Ingersoll who came to talk about the facts of Christianity. It was necessary to go into detail with him about the person of Christ, and you will remember the result was that a year later he said he was intellectually persuaded that Christ was the Son of God. Here was a man who took nothing for granted, so what helped him may serve you in dealing with men who are unsettled about the person of Christ.

First of all, I set forth to this student the fact of Christ's sinlessness. Morally he was the one perfect man. He was convinced that the nations would be judged in accordance with their attitude toward his person. This would be impossible to any save a perfect person. But not only was Christ himself conscious of being without sin; the disciples believed him to be so. St. Paul speaks of him as "him who knew no sin." St. Paul, better than any man of his time, knew the thought of all Christ's disciples, and he was fully persuaded that Christ was a perfect man.

The whole world has united in the verdict that he was sinless so far as act goes. Renan, the great French skeptic,

says in his "Life of Christ:" "We must place Jesus in the first of this great family of the true sons of God." And again he says: "The palm is his, who has been powerful both in words and in deeds, who has discerned the good, and at the price of his blood has made it triumph. Jesus from this double point of view is without equal; his glory remains entire and will ever be renewed."

Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood thou,

is the estimate of Tennyson.

Sidney Lanier in his "Crystal" calls the long roll of true and noble men—Shakespeare, Homer, Socrates, Buddha, and down to Tennyson; with each name he couples "some sweet forgiveness of their errors rich," but not so of Christ. Here Lanier adds his voice to the verdict of the world in calling Christ the one perfect man.

But thee, but thee, O sovereign Seer of time,  
But thee, O poets' Poet, wisdom's Tongue,  
But thee, O man's best Man, O love's best Love,  
O perfect life, in perfect labor writ,  
O all men's Comrade, Servant, King, or Priest—  
What *if* or *yet*, what mole, what flaw, what lapse,  
What least defect or shadow of defect,  
What rumor tattled by an enemy,  
Of inference loose, what lack of grace  
Even in torture's grasp, or sleep's, or death's,  
O what amiss may I forgive in thee,  
Jesus, good Paragon, thou crystal Christ.

## STUDY X. HELPING MEN SOLVE DIFFICULTIES ABOUT CHRIST.

“At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes; yea, Father, for so it was well pleasing in thy sight. All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him.” (Matt. xi. 25-27.)

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### PART 2. CHRIST'S CONSCIOUSNESS OF SONSHIP.

HAVING set forth the perfect manhood of Jesus, my student friend finally said: “But even a perfect man could not be the center of a religion.” To this I willingly assented, and went on to take the next step. Did Jesus claim to be more than a man?

As early as the age of twelve Jesus began to feel that stirring within his soul which made him conscious of a unique relationship to the Heavenly Father. This consciousness grew day by day and found expression in almost every discourse. The Scripture lesson for to-day sets forth clearly that Jesus believed himself in his relation to God to be more than a man. This is more strikingly represented throughout the Gospel of John. The conscious sonship is for Jesus the supreme reality of his life—it enters into his every act, it dominates every conception. To leave it out or ignore it makes his life practically unintelligible, and at the same time makes it impossible to explain why the disciples were so sure that this sense of sonship was for Jesus the supreme and governing reality. If there is anything of truth in history, we must believe that Jesus and all his followers were absolutely sure that he was uniquely related to God.

Growing out of this relationship, Jesus believed that his mission was to make God known as a Father. God throughout the centuries had been attempting to reveal himself to men, and Jesus felt that he was the final and complete revelation. "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "It is the knowledge of God," says Harnack, "that makes the sphere of the Divine sonship. Jesus is convinced that he knows God in a way in which no other one ever knew him before, and he knows it is his vocation to communicate this knowledge of God to others by word and by deed."

The proof that he was right is found in the fact that his conception of God is to-day (nineteen hundred years later) the highest and truest conception of God that men have found. So far as any man can see into life, there is no element left out of Christ's picture of God which any human could wish to see there. A Christlike God has come to be the highest ideal of the human race.

The very God! think Abib; dost thou think?  
So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too—  
So, through the thunder comes a human voice,  
Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!  
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!  
Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of mine,  
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,  
And thou must love me, who have died for thee.

—*Browning's "An Epistle."*

## STUDY X. HELPING MEN SOLVE DIFFICULTIES ABOUT CHRIST.

"Now Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then saith Pilate unto him, Hearst thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he gave him no answer, not even to one word; insomuch that the governor marveled greatly." (Matt. xxvii. 11-14.)

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### PART 3. WAS CHRIST AN IMPOSTOR, A CRAZY MAN, OR WHAT HE THOUGHT HIMSELF TO BE?

BUT my troubled student was not yet satisfied. He asked if Jesus might not conceivably be an impostor, or if not, might he not be a crazy or deluded man?

To the first there were two answers. If Christ were an impostor pure and simple, he would surely have recanted in time to save his life. Men do not play a rôle that brings death just for the sake of the rôle. But Christ protested to the end, as all Scripture references indicate, that he was the Son of God. Not only so, but if Christ were an impostor, we would at once be faced with the problem of explaining his character. Every student of character knows very well that a man's thoughts determine his moral life. A man cannot profess one thing and believe another without suffering the consequences. Hypocrisy eats like a canker at a man's soul, and sooner or later the hollowness of that soul shows in outward life. Victor Hugo in his "Toilers of the Sea" tells us that "Hypocrisy transforms and engenders its own hideous deformity." Everyday observation tells us this is true. No life can be founded on a lie and still be beautiful. But Christ's life was absolutely beautiful, the most perfect the world has ever seen. We cannot, therefore, conceive of his being an impostor. Psychologically this possibility is ruled out.



"Could it not be possible that Christ was deceived?" said my student. Let us see. Men are mistaken about some things in life and still have balanced character. But are men who labor under an all-absorbing delusion men of poise and balance? We think not. When a man becomes dominated by a delusion which makes up his very life he becomes erratic, unbalanced, lacking in calm. Buddha, though calm, lost his true perspective and cast to the winds the sacred ties of home and set forth a kind of system which no man in a normal life could live. Buddhism is abnormal, an abortion. Mohammed became mad for power. And so it goes with the men who have been dominated by a great delusion. But Christ was the calmest, the most perfectly poised, the sanest man the world has ever seen. At times they called him crazy, not because he was erratic, but because he was so unselfish, so calm in the midst of turmoil, so self-possessed in the midst of danger, that men thought he surely could not understand what went on about him. Any man who reads the story of the Gospels must be amazed at the serenity of a life cast into the midst of such unrest. This calmness does not betoken craziness or delusion. Neither could this picture have been painted by any save those who had an original. It was too foreign to the seething, turbulent feelings of the Jews of his time. It must have been a true picture.

Nor can we conceive of the splendid message Christ gave coming from a crazy man. We have seen in other studies that he gave us the final standard of morals. We have seen that our conception of God comes to its final consummation in Jesus Christ, we have seen that it has sent forth men into the world to live brotherly lives. Is it conceivable that the highest conception for all time could come from a crazy man? This seems impossible.

The only explanation is that Christ was what he claimed he was, the very Son of God, the complete revelation of the Father.

## STUDY X. HELPING MEN SOLVE DIFFICULTIES ABOUT CHRIST.

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.” (John i. 14.)

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### PART 4. IS THE INCARNATION IDEA INCONSISTENT WITH REASON?

My inquiring student admitted that all of these things said about Christ seemed to be logical and seemed to be substantiated by facts. But still he could not accept the idea of an incarnation. “This,” he said, “is opposed to all reason; we have nothing anywhere else in life corresponding to it.” Is this really true? If it is true, then a man would be justified in rejecting it. Mind, I do not say we must demonstrate all we believe, but I do say that no man who respects his reason (and it is God-given) can accept any theory which cuts square across every pronouncement of that reason. Before we can finally rest, we must come to see that the thing is reasonable, though of course we may not be able to demonstrate it, for few things are demonstrable.

So deep is this need of an incarnation bedded in human nature that the religious world has continued to believe in it, though frequently enough on insufficient grounds. Even in those religions whose philosophical systems deny the incarnation idea the human heart has found some way to circumvent the philosophies and find an incarnation in fact. This makes us feel that there must be something fundamental to human nature in the conception.

So long as we think of nature as simply made up of material forces, an incarnation will seem to be a break in the uniform action of those forces. But we have learned to

think of nature as material forces plus a divine personal will ; or better, we think of nature as material forces shot through and filled with a divine will. In other words, God dwells in the universe and permeates all things, and the final reality is not material but God. If this is granted, as I believe it must be, then the physical universe is simply the expression of God. God not only dwells in it, but through it we see God. What man of us who has stood on a mountain top and, looking away into the distance, seeing range on range of mountains that pile themselves together in majestic splendor, as he looked has not somehow felt that he was in the presence of god? A deep awe steals over the soul, for God is looking forth in majesty from these mighty hills. Or what man of us has not stood and gazed at a flaming sunset and somehow felt that God is there? Beauty and grandeur are completely non-utilitarian ; their one purpose seems to be to reveal God. The whole of nature seems to show forth God. Now this is an incarnation. This is God taking on material form and looking forth on men. One has well said: "The incarnation idea is essentially that of the unseen universe looking forth on us from the seen." If this be true, and the unseen God is daily looking forth on us from the seen universe, there cannot be anything unreasonable in the incarnation idea. If God can look forth on us from material nature, is there any inherent impossibility in his looking forth on us from a much higher realm—that of personality?

The facts which we have found lead us to believe that precisely this thing happened in the person of Jesus Christ, and God looks forth from that personality upon the world.

## STUDY X. HELPING MEN SOLVE DIFFICULTIES ABOUT CHRIST.

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John i. 4.)

"For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself." (John v. 26.)

"The thief cometh not, but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy: I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." (John x. 10.)

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John xiv. 6.)

"But these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ; . . . and that believing ye may have life in his name." (John xx. 31.)



### PART 5. JESUS'S CONSCIOUSNESS AS THE GIVER OF LIFE.

HAVING seen who Jesus was, and having made ourselves sure that there is a reasonableness in his claim, we can now turn to ask what Jesus Christ thought he could do for men. One of the remarkable things about Christ's teaching lies in the fact that he clearly identifies himself with his message. He and his message are one. That is, he not only comes to reveal God, but he says that in him is the God life. He not only comes to reveal truth, but he is the truth.

No other religions can show any analogy to this. If Mohammed did not live, that makes no difference now, for the system does exist; but if Christ did not live we have no Christianity, for he and the message are one. Mohammedanism is the religion of a book; Christianity is the religion of a person. When Gautama the Buddha was nearing death he said to his followers: "Whosoever shall adhere unweariedly to the law and discipline, he shall cross the ocean of life and make an end of sorrow." When Jesus Christ was ready to ascend he said nothing of the law, but "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." There is a vast difference here. "In him was life," full and abundant. He felt sure, therefore, that he could pass that life on to men.

The scientific student goes into the laboratory, and, taking his formula, tests it to see if it gives the proper results. If he follows the conditions laid down, he gets the results. Another man, who tries the same formula but does not follow the conditions in full, fails to get the results. He allows an error to slip in—some precipitate or acid or what not. But if every man who meets the conditions of the formula finds the same results, we say the formula is correct.

The men who have met Christ's conditions, have taken him at his word, have acted as he asked them to act, have always found him to be the life giver. The fact that some men may have halfway followed directions and failed to find life does not discredit Christ's claim. The test of reality is broad experience, and experience proves that Christ can do what he claimed—give life to them.

Christ, then, is not simply a perfect man who lived and died nearly two thousand years ago. If that were all, we could not be sure that we would not outgrow him. He is life and the life giver. He is the inspirer and impartor of the highest and holiest life we know, and hence cannot be outgrown. He is final and unsurpassable not alone because he presented the truest ideals, but because he alone can impart to us the life which appropriates these ideals. Our spiritual growth will not be beyond him, but more completely into him.

If Christ, as thou affirmest, be of men  
Mere man, the first and best but nothing more—  
Account him, for reward of what he was,  
Now and forever, wretchedest of all.  
For see; himself conceived of life as love,  
Conceived of love as what must enter in,  
Fill up, make one with his each soul he loved.

See if, for every finger of thy hands,  
There be not found that day the world shall end,  
Hundreds of souls each holding by Christ's word  
That he will grow incorporate with all,  
With me as Pamphylax, with him as John,  
Groom for each bride. Can a mere man do this?  
Yet Christ saith, this he lived and died to do.  
Call Christ, then, the illimitable God,  
Or lost! —Browning's "*A Death in the Desert*."

*Personal Thought:* Have you ever given yourself over completely to this life-giving person, so that he could fill you with his own life?

## STUDY X. HELPING MEN SOLVE DIFFICULTIES ABOUT CHRIST.

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again. . . . Wherefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." (2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 17.)

"But they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." (Isa. xl. 31.)

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### PART 6. SHALL WE CULTIVATE THE LARGER LIFE?

To those of us who have come to know God as a Father, Christ as a life giver, the Holy Spirit as a guide and comforter, surely the apostle is right; all things are become new. These messages have been written in the hope that they might give expression to some of the experiences which others have had but have not been able quite to put into expression. Through them I have hoped that men and women who may study them will be impelled to go out and report their experiences to others in simple fashion, now that expression for such experiences has been found. I am hoping that by such relating of experience others will be led to know Christ.

For a moment to-day, however, I want to turn aside to say that your experience must be a growing one. You cannot live to-morrow on the experience had yesterday. Day by day you must be renewing that experience. You would not think of trying to live for all the remaining years of your life on the friendship experience that you had last year

with your best friend. If you did you would soon enough wake up to find there was no friendship there.

Now friendship takes time. As I have remarked before, it gains time for us; but first of all, it costs time. If I am too busy to spend a few moments with you from time to time, I cannot hope to find my friendship growing.

The danger with most of us in Christian life is that we are not willing to provide for the time element. Perhaps most who have followed these studies have again and again missed certain portions because time was wanting. I want to renew my plea for time, that three things may become a regular part of our lives. First, I want to plead that in our lives there shall be a few moments each day for the study of the Bible. There you will remember we said we live with men who have met God. This is a moral power in our life which we can ill afford to miss. Then I want to plead for a few moments each morning to be spent in prayer. Our study has helped us to see afresh that God is in his universe, that he is a fatherly person, that he is interested in men. Prayer does effect something, for all these elements are here given to make it effective. Lastly, I want to make a plea for time to be given to Christian work. This is essential, if we are to grow in fellowship with God. He that waiteth upon Jehovah shall surely renew his strength.

## STUDY X. HELPING MEN SOLVE DIFFICULTIES ABOUT CHRIST.

"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?  
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which  
is brought upon me,  
Wherewith Jehovah hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce  
anger. . . .  
The Lord hath set at nought all my mighty men in the midst of me;  
He hath called a solemn assembly against me to crush my young men:  
The Lord hath trodden as in a winepress the virgin daughter of  
Judah." (Lam. i. 12, 15.)

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### PART 7. SUMMARY.

I TRUST we have seen in these studies that Christian life is not something abnormal, but completely normal. It is just our everyday powers and capacities reaching out toward God. It is friendship pure and simple, with one person in that friendship a perfect and complete personality. This at once makes religion the most natural of all our relationships, and at the same time dignifies it by putting it in the place of supremacy.

In the second place, I trust we have found that something actually does happen when a man becomes a Christian. It is not simply a name; it is a life. New forces have been set up within a man which make life new and wonderfully beautiful. For all of this I trust we have found adequate causes in Christ the Redeemer of men.

In the third place, I trust we have come a little more clearly to see the need of men for religion. If it makes such a difference, if men are lost, and Christ is able to bring them back to life, surely here is a call for heroic service.

In the fourth place, I hope we have seen that our simple



testimony is Christ's one way of spreading this kingdom. If men are in sin and in need, and only Jesus can help them, perhaps you are the one person able to bring Christ to the attention of some of those men. It is the chance an angel would greatly covet. Will you not this day covenant with yourself that in all your future days you will pass on this life-giving message?

The author of Lamentations stood looking out over the ruined city of Jerusalem. Her fair daughters had been taken away, and her strong sons had been slain. Men and women were coming and going, all unmindful of the broken walls and the dashed hope of the proud city of God. And as he saw the indifference he cried from a broken heart: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?"

The young men and women of our land are going into sin. Character, the most sacred thing in the world, is being dashed to the ground. Souls are groping in misery and sorrow. I fancy Jesus Christ looking down on all this waste and suffering and sin and crying out to you and me: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by; behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is brought upon me?" Christ has given his life; will we pass that life on to lost men?

Worlds are changing, heaven beholding,  
 Thou hast but one hour to fight;  
 Now the blazoned cross unfolding,  
 On, right onward for the right.  
 O, let all the soul within you  
 For the truth's sake go abroad;  
 Strike, let every nerve and sinew  
 Tell on Ages, tell for God.

—Coxe.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Below will be found two sets of reference books which I have worked through with some care in order to give a brief word of comment which might guide the student in choosing. Those marked with an asterisk (\*) are more or less technical and useful for advanced students, such as ministers, secretaries of Young Men's Christian Associations, etc.

### BOOKS ON THE FACTS OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

*Begbie, Harold.*—"Twice-Born Men," a clinic in regeneration. (Revell.) The study of nine cases of regeneration of a most decided type, attempting to show that religion and religion alone has power to regenerate such lives. It is remarkably convincing, and will put new zeal into the reader.

*Bowne, Borden P.*—"Studies in Christianity." (Houghton-Mifflin.) A vital statement of the meaning of Revelation, the Incarnation, and the present growth of the Christian ideal.

*Coe, George A.*—"The Spiritual Life." (Eaton & Mains.) A very suggestive study of forces which make for moral and religious life. It is both scientific and inspirational.

"The Religion of a Mature Mind." (Revell.) A bold but constructive study of present-day religious problems, such as "Authority in Religion," "The Christ of Personal Experience," etc.

*Clark, William Newton.*—"Can I Believe in God the Father?" (Scribner's.) The most convincing statement, in small compass, that I know. Every Christian worker should read it.

*Clark, Henry W.*—"The Philosophy of Christian Experience." (Revell.) His chapters on "Conversion," "Repentance," "Christ the Life-Giver," and "Faith" are exceedingly suggestive. They give a reasonable basis for religious life.

\**Inge, William R.*—"Faith and Its Psychology." (Scribner's.) Just what the title indicates—a most scholarly and careful investigation of the basis and the development of faith. Genuinely constructive and helpful to advanced students.

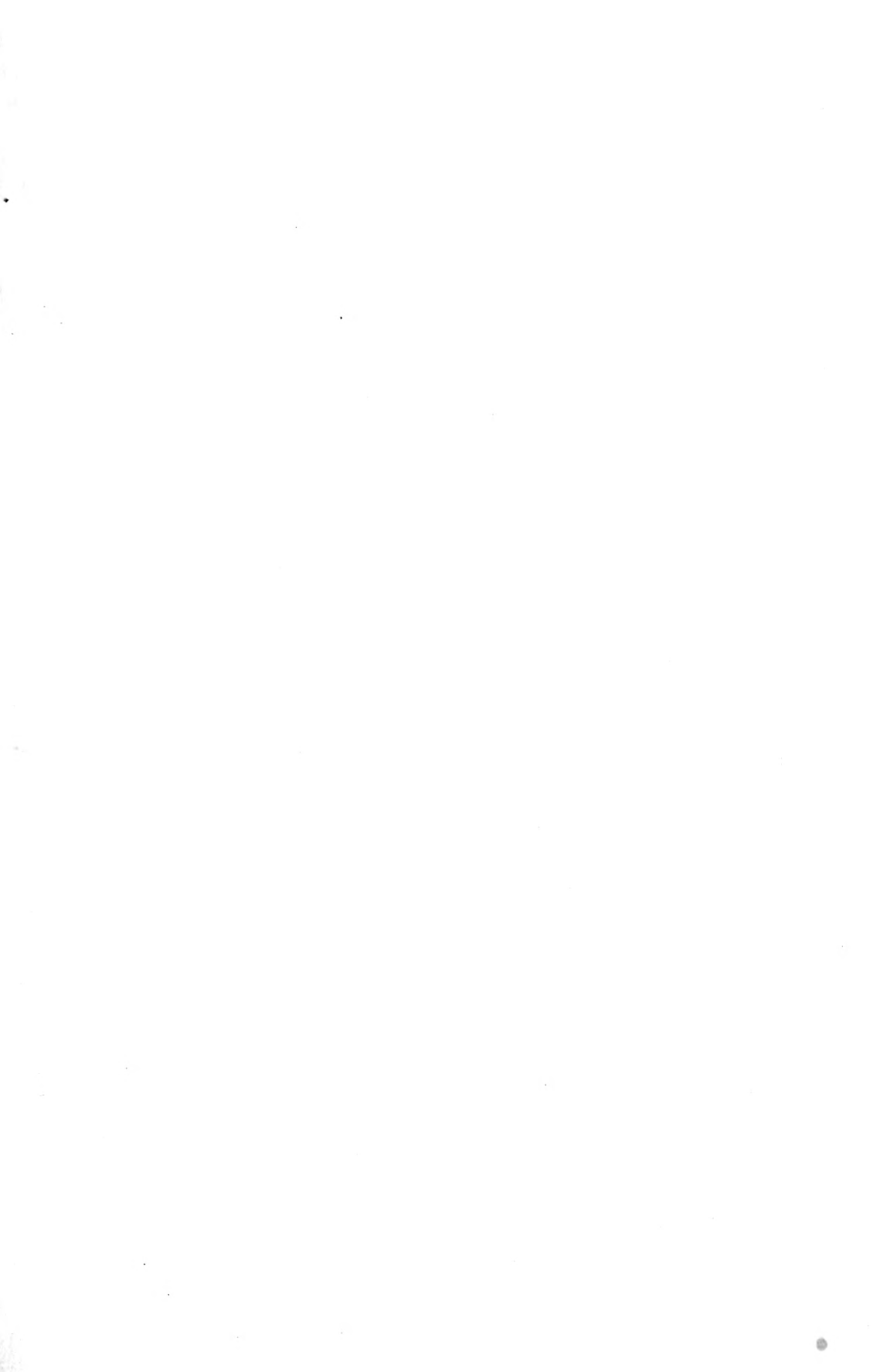
*Jackson, George.*—"The Fact of Conversion." (Revell.) Setting forth the present-day reality, the varieties of form, and the psychological working of conversion. Very readable and stimulating.

- \**James, William*.—"Varieties of Religious Experience." (Longmans.) Dealing with a vast amount of evidence on the reality but variety of religious experience. It throws much light on the psychological working of sin and the Spirit of God. It will repay careful study.
- \**Knox, George William*.—"The Direct and Fundamental Proofs of the Christian Religion." (Scribner's.) Setting forth the finality of the Christian religion, with introducing chapters on the test of reality, etc. Very concise and satisfying.
- Keedy, Edward Everett*.—"The Naturalness of Christian Life." (Putnam's.) Simple, practical, suggestive.
- \**Rashdall, Rev. Hastings*.—"Philosophy and Religion." (Scribner's.) "Aids to educated men desirous of thinking out for themselves a reasonable basis for personal religion." This sentence from the Preface finds adequate fulfillment in the book.
- \**Starbuck, Edwin Diller*.—"The Psychology of Religion." (Scribner's.) Better named "The Psychology of Conversion." A most painstaking investigation, but based on somewhat insufficient evidence. One feels amply repaid for its study, though one does not always accept its conclusions.

#### BOOKS ON PRACTICAL METHODS OF PERSONAL WORK.

- Bosworth, Edward I.*—"Studies in the Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles." (Y. M. C. A. Press.) The most thorough and fundamental study of Christ's method and message that I know. To it many students are indebted more than to any other one book outside the Bible for their conception of Christ's message. Arranged in daily studies. No Christian worker can afford to miss the study of this book. Price, 75 cents.
- "Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ." (Y. M. C. A. Press.) An orderly arrangement of the life of Christ in daily studies. Scholarly, biblical, deeply spiritual, the best course of Bible study on the topic to be had.
- Gordon, S. D.*—"Quiet Talks on Personal Problems." (Revell.)
- "Quiet Talks on Service." (Y. M. C. A. Press.)
- Hicks, Harry Wade*.—"A Memorial of Horace William Rose." (Y. M. C. A. Press.) A stimulating biography of a real personal worker.
- Holden, Stuart*.—"The Price of Power." (Revell.) Attempting to set forth the secret of power in service.

- Johnstone, Howard Agnew*.—"Studies in God's Methods of Training Workers." (Y. M. C. A. Press.) Daily studies of Bible characters as they are used by God in extending his kingdom.
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